THE PLAYSTATION 3 MAGAZINE

PSM3

February 2010
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UK's No.1 PlayStation 3 M

FIRST DETAILS

Batman Arkham Asylum 2

Kratos VS Dante

PLAYED! God Of War 3 vs Dante's Inferno – rated blow-by-blow

Extended Play section

From *FIFA 10* to *Uncharted 2*... PS3's top online games revealed

Ten reasons *Brutal Legend* turns it up to eleven

Plus MORE

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HUGE 2010 PREVIEW SPECIAL

157 HOT NEW PS3 GAMES INSIDE

Dead Space 2 | Heavy Rain
Medal of Honor | Agent
Gran Turismo 5 | Brink
TRON: Evolution | FIFA 11
Tomb Raider: Reboot
FFXIII More...

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WORLD EXCLUSIVE REVIEW

BIOSHOCK 2

Warning! Daddy's little girl is growing up... fast

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Team Intro

The first and last word in PS3 games

PSM3'S PROMISE

Fact. Opinion. That's our mantra. We say 'no' to waffly, indulgent, previews and deliver what matters. We know games cost £50, and our hard-hitting, expert, reviews reflect that simple fact. No mag gives you more new games, or does more to champion innovative, off-radar, potential classics. If you love games, and want more from your PS3, we'll get along just great.

"PS3 owned 2009. And it's only getting stronger this year"

"2010 is a special year for PS3. Yeah, we say that every January, but this time the quality really does speak for itself. Our cover game, *BioShock 2* (reviewed on page 72) is a perfect example. Most believed a second trip to Rapture – despite being predictably great – wouldn't have the same impact, the same thrills, or the same polish. They were wrong. In many ways this new *BioShock* is even better than the genre-defining original. Want to see what else is coming in the next 12 months? Flick to page 22 where we kick off our epic 2010 feature with a first-look at *Dead Space 2*, before lifting the lid on the sequel to *Arkham Asylum* and the rebooted *Medal Of Honor*. Then there's *Agent*, *MGS Rising*, *God of War 3*, *Final Fantasy XIII*, *GT5*... like we said: this really is a special year."

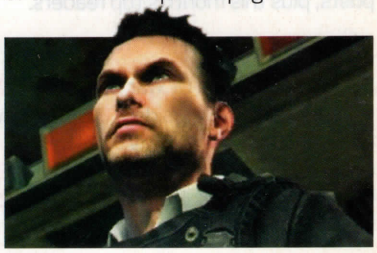
Daniel Dawkins Editor psm3@futurenet.com

In the making of this issue of PSM3...
154 games in our 2010 feature. Phew. 18 Little Sisters selfishly harvested. 11 bards killed off in *Assassin's Creed 2*.

If you only read three things in this issue...

BioShock 2 review

Find out why a second trip through the sunken city of Rapture is better than the first. Read the world's first review of the shock sequel on page 72.



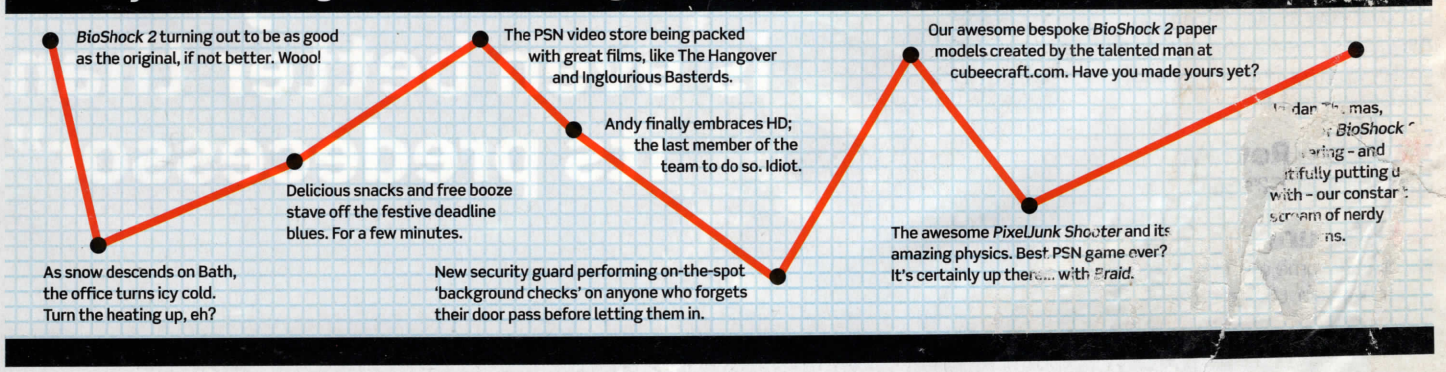
MW2 plot guide

Every loose end in *Modern Warfare 2*'s twisting plot tied up, plus the gaping plot holes that we couldn't fill. Understand *everything* on page 94.

Guide to 2010

The year's biggest games revealed, plus the off-radar hits you should be keeping your eyes on. Start getting excited about 2010 on page 22.

February 2010: The highs and lows of making this month's PSM3


BioShock 2 turning out to be as good as the original, if not better. Wooo!
As snow descends on Bath, the office turns icy cold. Turn the heating up, eh?
Delicious snacks and free booze stave off the festive deadline blues. For a few minutes.
The PSN video store being packed with great films, like The Hangover and Inglourious Basterds.
Andy finally embraces HD; the last member of the team to do so. Idiot.
New security guard performing on-the-spot 'background checks' on anyone who forgets their door pass before letting them in.
Our awesome bespoke *BioShock 2* paper models created by the talented man at cubeecraft.com. Have you made yours yet?
The awesome *PixelJunk Shooter* and its amazing physics. Best PSN game ever? It's certainly up there.... with *Braid*.

PSM3

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A world of games at a glance

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Go to page 68 NOW!

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"In a lot of ways this is even better than its predecessor"

BioShock 2 **72**

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On The DVD

Flippable DVD action

THE DUAL-SIDED DISC

Side A:
See the latest game trailers – works on any DVD player

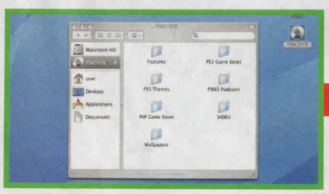
Side B:
See real HD movies on your PS3 plus saves, themes, more

DVD Highlights Saves, videos, themes

Plus Gran Turismo 5 | Final Fantasy XIII | God of War 3 | BioShock 2 | Super Street Fighter IV Full Assassin's Creed Lineage movie | Dante's Inferno anime | Bayonetta dev diary More...

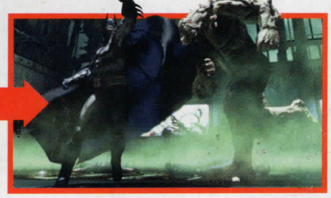
How to... Use everything on Side B of the disc

PS3 GAME SAVES How to use PS3 game saves



Step 1 Insert a USB stick into your computer and make a folder on it called 'PS3', then one inside called 'SAVEDATA'. Drag the saves you want into here.

Step 2 Insert the stick into your PS3, go to 'Game' then 'Save Data'. Click on the USB device, then copy the saves you want by pressing Ⓐ on the game's folder.



Step 3 And that's it. Simply load up the game, and you'll be able to use our game save. But is it as satisfying as playing honestly? Is it?

HD VIDEO FILES

Step 1 Insert Side B of the disc into your PS3, then click across to 'Video' on the cross-media bar (XMB). Select the disc and press Ⓐ.
Step 2 Choose 'Display All' from the menu, and then highlight all the trailers you want to copy and download them to your hard drive.
Step 3 View the trailers in your videos list.

PS3 THEMES

Step 1 Insert a USB stick into your computer. Create a folder on it called 'PS3'.
Step 2 Create a folder inside called 'THEME' and copy the themes you want into it.
Step 3 Put the USB stick into the PS3, locate the 'System' menu, then 'Themes'. Choose 'Install' and 'Select USB Device'. The themes will install.

PS3 WALLPAPERS

Step 1 Find the wallpapers folder on side B.
Step 2 Make a folder on a USB stick called 'WALLPAPER' and copy your chosen wallpapers to it (or select all of them). Put the USB stick in your PS3.
Step 3 Access the USB stick. You'll see your chosen wallpapers. Select one, press Ⓐ again, then Ⓧ to set it as wallpaper, and 'Options' to crop it.

Faulty disc? Send it to Disc Replacement, Reader Support, Future Publishing Ltd, Bath, BA1 2BW

3 things to watch first this month

Red Dead Redemption

A guide to the game's best features, all presented with in-game footage.

Just Cause 2

Insane stunts in a lush island paradise. An alternative to *GTA*'s seriousness.

Gran Turismo 5

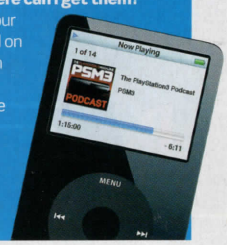
See the real driving sim – featuring some very shiny cars – in action.

PLUS!

PSM3 Podcasts

You do podcasts? Where can I get them?

Although you can find our podcasts on iTunes and on psm3mag.com, you can also get a selection of recent podcasts on Side B. Go to the 'Podcasts' folder to hear them. They're MP3 format, so will work on PC, Mac, iPod and your PS3.



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Frontline

Hard news, all PlayStation action

HIGHLIGHTS

Two hours of *Final Fantasy XIII*
God of War 3 vs *Dante's Inferno*
Getting emotional over *Heavy Rain*

Leading devs explain what's next for PS3 hardware

Motion-control, triple-A game downloads, proper 3D gaming... so much more

This year the game is just the start, as Sony's recent ad campaign is so keen to tell us. That means hardware advances, and big changes in the way we interact with Sony's consoles. So what can we expect to see over the next year?

First off, we're likely to see the first, full, triple-A blockbuster game distributed solely online via the PlayStation Network. Xbox 360 already has full games on demand, but so far PS3 has been lagging behind. However, whereas full games on PSN will undoubtedly be a good thing for us gamers, the development community is wary of the way Sony is running PSN for independent devs working on smaller titles, like Minis.

One leading dev, who wishes to remain anonymous, recently told PSM3, "The key issue here is that, like the App store and Xbox Live, this is a closed system – developers will be competing against Sony's own products that will be developed, marketed and streamed through the whole system without outside intervention, which is bad for competition." He goes on to say, "A more open system would be better, as would something like Microsoft's community games program, so it'll be interesting to see if Sony blocks access to Internet flash-games or merely fails to keep the PS3's Flash software up-to-date, which would have the same effect."

PS3 will also embrace motion-control gaming this year, and developers are already impressed with the tech. Speaking in a recent interview, director at TT Games, Jon Burton commented that he thought Microsoft's motion control rival, Natal, would suffer from lag. He went on to say "I was actually more impressed with Sony's motion capture solution than Microsoft's Natal". Promising stuff.

There's also a bunch of new ancillary tech that should really give PlayStation gaming a kick in 2010. Epic will release their Unreal Engine 4, Crytek will unleash their first Cry-Engine developed games on PS3, and it's virtually certain Rockstar's *Agent* will showcase a fresh version of their impressive RAGE engine.

Finally, we already know all the major tech manufacturers are getting ready to unveil their latest 3D capable TVs at CES in Las Vegas later this month. Although *Avatar* was a less than impressive start for 3D gaming, the tech was impressive, so we can expect to see more devs taking advantage of better, cheaper 3D enabled tellies throughout the coming year.

Want more? Flip the page to see what the future holds for PS3, according to some of the industry's leading tech-experts.

Flick to P22 to check out all the games of 2010

"PS3 will embrace motion-control gaming this year"

What's in store for PlayStation

We quiz games industry tech experts about Sony's 2010...

"I'm dreading the arrival of Sony's motion controller in 2010. The last thing gaming needs is another console full of novelty willy-waving games you can't play properly and have to stand up for. At least you know where you are with a d-pad and the ⊗ button.

Gary Cutlack aka Commander Zorg of UK: Resistance

"If 2009 was all about the games, 2010 looks set to be about how we play them. Few would have realised when playing *WishyWashy* on their EyeToy that they were actually participating in essentially a tech-demo for 2010's motion controller, whatever it proves to be called. Whilst the DualShocks will be around for a few more years to come, it'll be interesting to see the steps taken towards proper gesture control. Hopefully it'll be fully ironed out in time for *Hot Coffee 2*."

Simon Byron, One Life Left

"I expect 2010 will see substantial upgrades in the dashboard, as well as the addition of Sky TV besides other online services. Upgrades in *Home*, firmware and not forgetting the motion controllers, which could see some really cool interactions with the EyeToy.

Obviously the racing highlight will be the vast *Gran Turismo 5*, this could see a possible surprise announcement of new licenses and modes. It's about time a new *Ridge Racer* hit the scene. *GRID 2* is also on the cards for late summer. E3 could potentially be big for Sony. It'll be interesting to see the new generation third party titles that are optimising PS3 hardware performance.

You could say it'll be the year of motion control but my eye is on the new generation of 3D gaming. The recent *Avatar* game blew my mind with its execution and potential possibilities. A combination with head-tracking could be interesting."

Alan Boiston, Editor of vvvgamer.com

"2010 will be the crunch year for the PS3 which, despite Sony's protestations that it has sold according to plan, hasn't lived up to its predecessors. Two things are key: dropping the price to £199.99 and upping the number of PS3 exclusives by a factor of ten or thereabouts. *Uncharted 2* was great, but it ploughs a lonely furrow. *Gran Turismo 5* has to be demonstrably superior to *Forza 3*, *Need For Speed Shift* and *Split/Second*. *The Last Guardian* will be next year's *Uncharted 2*, but it needs support. *Final Fantasy XIII* and *BioShock 2* will be must-buys, but no bragging rights with *Xbox 360* owners there. Shuhei Yoshida needs to produce a hat and pull a lot of rabbits out of it at E3."

Steve Boxer, The Guardian

"For me, the big ace that Sony has up its sleeve for 2010 is the firmware upgrade that'll allow the PS3 to play 3D movies and games. Of course you'll also need a new 3DTV to get this working, but it just shows how the PS3 was built to last and is future-proofed. All major TV manufacturers will be

"All eyes will be on the camera-based motion controller in 2010; Microsoft stole the plaudits with Natal back at E3, but can Sony's slightly odd looking wand-and-ball device actually establish itself and become a major part of PlayStation gaming?"

Patrick Goss, Editor, TechRadar.com

How PSM3's 2009 predictions worked out

DEAD RISING 2'S SETTING ✓ RIGHT

This time last year we were divining the PS3's future. Although a few of our 'visions' were a bit off – sadly, *Leisure Suit Larry* did end up being released – we correctly predicted that *Dead Rising 2* would be set in a fictionalised version of Las Vegas.

WINNING BIG

ALIENS VS PREDATOR ✓ RIGHT

Ignore our previews of the Aliens RPG (cancelled) and Aliens: Colonial Marines (delayed, potentially cancelled), and concern yourself with the seemingly mad speculation that a *third* Aliens game was in development. Indeed it was: the third one turned out to *Aliens vs. Predator*, a game that totally exists. Uncannily accurate.

SURPRISE

TONY HAWK RIDES BOARD ✓ RIGHT

We called it – the new *Tony Hawk* did indeed come with a skateboard peripheral in an attempt to outdo *Skate*. We weren't too optimistic that EA's skating series would be bettered either, and guess what: it most definitely hasn't been...

WIPEOUT

launching 3D compatible TVs and the PS3 will be able to make the most of the technology at no extra cost."
Andrew Oliver, CTO, Blitz Games

"Motion control... motion control and motion control. With Natal moving into view on in 2010 at a commodified price (according to sources close to everybody), the PS3 needs its 'Gem' or 'Sphere' or 'Dildo' to hit with some enormous impact.

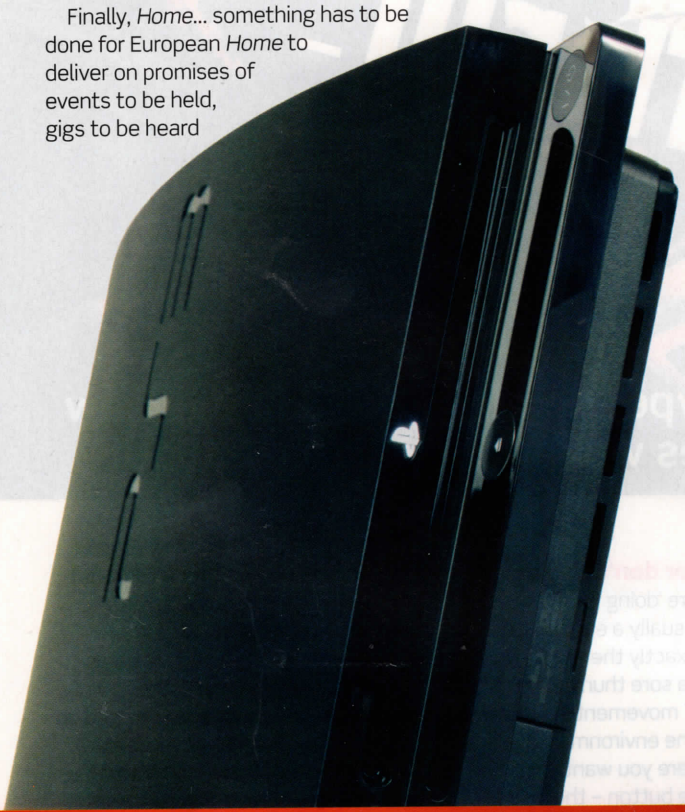
I'd also expect, with Sony's joined-up company under Sir Howard Stringer, for 3D to make its mark in PlayStation land in 2010. I don't think it's too early for at least some key journos in gaming to be delivered 3D Bravias with a copies of Heavy Rain 3D, the David Cage Director's cut. I then expect these key hacks to go potty about the system in the same way as they did about the benighted *Beatles* and the sad as all shit *Saboteur*.

Finally, *Home*... something has to be done for European *Home* to deliver on promises of events to be held, gigs to be heard and communities to be built. Microsoft's less than superb live experience has the mind of the public."
Tim Smith, Editor of SPOnG.com

"*Shadow of Colossus* and *Ico* both rank in my top 10 games of all time. So Team Ico's '*The Last Guardian*' is certainly one of the most exciting releases of 2010 for me.

It's refreshing to see a developer focusing on gameplay principals other than just guns, gloss and zombies.

The bar has been set pretty high with their previous releases however Team Ico are the masters of creating emotionally engaging games - *The Last Guardian* looks like it'll be fantastic."
Robin Lacey, Beatnik Games Ltd



"Sony has a great opportunity to forge ahead with its 'PS3 as a multimedia platform strategy' by expanding its catalogue on PSN and building more strategic partnerships with all content aggregators. PS3 will be at the heart of the network strategy within Sony across the consumer electronics, music and movie silos.
Nick Parker, Games Analyst

"2010 for me is going to be all about 3D and motion sensing. I can't wait to see the integration of both into quality games."
Simon Barratt, Four Door Lemon

"We're likely to see mainstream publishers moving towards more browser-based games, like *Quake: Live*, as ways of extending their brands during development periods. This is relevant to PS3, because of the built-in browser, as it could easily support remote or streamed gaming, and because of the increasing prevalence of full games being available on all platforms through digital download. It's likely that we'll see the first full, true AAA game distributed solely through PSN in the next year."
Rich Keen, Marketing Director Direct2Drive & IGN UK

While PS3's 2010 software line-up isn't as intimidating as that of 2009, it should hit a sales high in spring thanks to *God Of War 3*.

PSN could be crucial. Microsoft has deservedly captured hearts and minds with Xbox Live, but Sony has a number of advantages. It owns one of the oldest and most successful MMO devs in Sony Online Entertainment. It has a proven commitment to high quality online services and games (*Home*, *The Agency*). And its service is free."
Edwin Evans-Thirlwell
Senior Editor, VideogamesDaily.com

EAT LEAD WAS RUBBISH ☑ RIGHT

You didn't need a crystal ball to divine that *Eat Lead* or *Shellshock 2* would be terrible, but that doesn't diminish our heroic accomplishment. We also said that '70s set bank-robbing game *Hei$t* and immortality simulator *Highlander* would never escape from development hell. We were dead right.

AND ONE WE GOT WRONG ☒ WRONG

For ages, all we had on *Ico 3* was that single, tantalising image of a well with a chain dropping down it. What could it *possibly* mean? Although the answer's obvious now – it's a sea eagle – a year ago we thought the creature might be a giant wolf. Oh dear. We also didn't predict that it would be renamed The Last Guardian, although how could we have known?

The Opinionator

"We've got enough zombie games, thanks"

We've nothing against zombies, aside from their slightly annoying habit of eating our delicious brains, but they've become so overused lately we're in danger of getting sick of them, and that's unfair to the humble walking corpse. The undead have given us some great times over the years. Zombies are such fun to slice up that they've recently supplanted the Nazi or alien as the enemy of choice, appearing in everything from *COD: WAW* to *Borderlands*' first add-on, *The Zombie Island of Dr. Ned*. The PS3 has been protected from *Left 4 Dead*, but the undead always find a way to break through your defences – look at *Zombie Apocalypse or Burn, Zombie, Burn!* on PSN.

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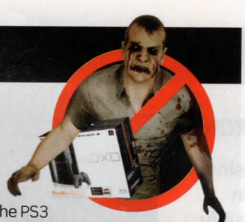
ZOMBG

It's not hard to see why they're popular. In an interview with Eurogamer, Jeff Strain – he's working on a zombie MMO for consoles – called them "guilt-free meat-puppets", and he's dead right, if you'll excuse the obvious pun. Zombies are fair game, not just because they're technically dead, but also due to their rather cannibalistic nature – they see humans as little more than walking variety buckets, and if you don't sever the head or destroy the brain they'll be feasting on your liver in mere minutes. Not cool.

We need to stop the flow of undead-themed games, or at least divert it into previously unexplored territory. How about a zombie dating sim, or a corpse-based driving game where you mindlessly follow a human around, Greyhound-style? Bizarrely, these things sort of exist: the PC title *King's Bounty* lets you take a zombie bride, while *Sonic & SEGA All-Stars Racing* features some characters from light gun shooter *House of the Dead*. Soon we won't be able to move for zombie games, and the only way out will be to shoot ourselves before we're over-run.

Tom Sykes

Myth-Buster



SEEN THIS? PS3 is a nightmare to develop for

THE TRUTH Believe everything you hear about the PS3 and you'll come away with the impression that it's the gaming equivalent of Alcatraz, with impenetrable architecture that proves a nightmare to navigate for games developers.

Valve have been the most vocal about it, saying that it's far easier to make and port games to the 360, which is why we're not likely to see *Left 4 Dead* anytime soon. But that doesn't necessarily make Sony's console more difficult to develop for: just different. If you take the time to figure the Cell processor out, you can create some truly remarkable PS3 games like *Uncharted 2* or *MGS4*. These games make 'easy' 360 ports look shabby and lazy. If they're the result of a complex development process then, frankly, ease of use is over-rated.

Design for life *Brink* has a distinct art style.

Thrill-List

No hype. No filler. The top five new games we're *really* excited about

1 Brink

Play nice or don't play at all

In a genre where 'doing things differently' is usually a euphemism for 'doing things exactly the same', *Brink* sticks out like a sore thumb. The game's SMART movement system lets you navigate the environment by pointing at where you want to go and holding a single button – the next evolutionary step of the first-person platforming seen in *Mirror's Edge*. But the boldest change is the game's freeform mixture of single and multi-player, and the way it rewards players for achieving objectives together rather than fooling around on their own. An exciting prospect for gamers with a passion for online.

Pub Bethesda | **Dev** Splash Damage | **ETA** Autumn

Friends in need *Brink* will redefine online co-op with its imaginative gameplay.

"Every aspect feels polished and fun"
God of War III page 14

"This is the next evolutionary step of the platforming seen in *Mirror's Edge*"

2 Dead Space 2
Watch this space

Isaac's made it back in one piece, with a sexier suit and a range of new weapons including one that pins Necromorphs to the wall. Sure, the inevitable multi-player might end up feeling tacked on, but if it's tacked onto a game as polished as the original we could live with that. Plus, how many games are set on the rings of Saturn?

Pub EA | **Dev** Visceral Games | **ETA** Late 2010

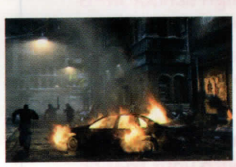
3 Medal of Honor
Setting its sights on *MW*

It was *Call of Duty*'s biggest competitor back in the day, but after *Medal of Honor: Airborne* the WWII shooter sank without trace. This brazen reboot is set in present-day Afghanistan, focusing on a group of highly talented, 'Tier 1' soldiers trained to handle situations no one else can. It's obviously inspired by *Modern Warfare* – the trailer shows vehicle bits and a section reminiscent of *MW*'s Death from Above section – but when the formula is so successful, why change it? Multi-player's being handled by DICE, of *Battlefield* fame, so this part of the game is guaranteed to be a superb too.

Pub EA | **Dev** EA | **ETA** Autumn

4 Batman: Arkham Asylum 2
Bats more like it

The debut trailer for the *AA* sequel suggests that Joker and Harley Quinn are dead certs to return, and hints at some new villains including Two Face, Penguin and Black Mask. The setting seems to have shifted to Gotham City too. After the unexpected pleasure of seeing a Bats game finally done right, our hopes are sky-high for *Asylum 2*.



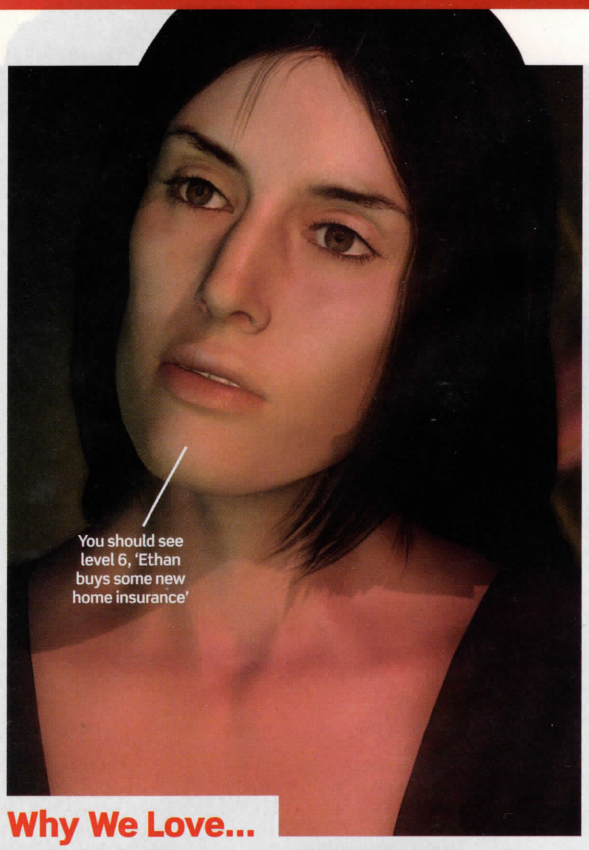
Tragic kingdom Gotham City becomes an asylum in ***Batman: Arkham Asylum 2.***

Pub Warner Bros | **Dev** Rocksteady | **ETA** Late 2010

5 Mikami's new game
The horror master returns to PlayStation

If the name Shinji Mikami doesn't mean anything to you, it *should*. He's the man responsible for *Resident Evil* and *Devil May Cry*, as well as the frankly bizarre *Killer 7*. Little is known about his secret new project but it's likely that it'll be the start of a new horror series of some kind, knowing his pedigree. Whatever it is, it's sure to be A) interesting B) weird and C) have zombies of some kind in it. Get in!

Pub Sega | **Dev** Platinum Games
ETA 2010



Why We Love...

The Mundane

We want to do... whatever

By 'mundane' you mean 'boring', right?

No, we don't. There's a distinction, even if it's not a very clear one. 'Boring' is an activity, however menial or supposedly action-packed, that you don't enjoy for some reason. Even a firefight can be boring if enemies absorb eight million bullets before they die. 'Mundane', on the other hand, refers to tasks like taking the rubbish out, eating dinner or going to school – exactly the sort of stuff we do in real life.

But real life is rubbish

Perhaps. But it's relatively unexplored territory in gaming. The opening of *Heavy Rain* simply asks you to interact with your family, not shoot an alien's ears off. As long as there's a sliver of interaction – and that interaction's entertaining, of course – doing 'nothing' can be strangely fascinating. Done right, the mundane can immerse you in a game world and invest you in its characters. *Fahrenheit* was at its best when you were doing little to advance the story, while the most interesting part of high school JRPG *Persona 3* was not the random battling; it was attending classes and hanging out with your friends. And remember the classes in Rockstar's *Bully*? To bring their worlds to life, and ground them in reality, games need an element of the ordinary.

A brief history

Previous games to die for
GTA: San Andreas, Fahrenheit, Persona 3

Future games to die for
Heavy Rain, Yakuza 3, Mafia II

The Insider

He's the man who knows too much...

With the arrival of Sony's **The Last Guardian** drawing ever closer, rumour has it that HD remakes of **Ico** and **Shadow of the Colossus** will be released on the PlayStation Store. In the States, **Final Fantasy VIII** has been released on the Store, so expect a UK version soon. Former PlayStation mascot **Crash Bandicoot** is also making his 'triumphant' return to the console, but there are no details as of yet.

Simon Cowell is said to be interested in developing a PS3 game. "If games are worth more than my TV show, and that's in 100 countries, then something is a bit out of control." Good to hear crafting a quality title is his primary focus for this project. Ahem.

"Simon Cowell wants to make a PS3 game"

After the demise of Free Radical, concept images and videos of **Star Wars Battlefront 3** leaked, and the project was presumed dead. But, it seems Activision are bringing the project back to life with a new, as yet unnamed, developer. Promising.

An ESRB document detailing some of the 'objectionable' content in **Dante's Inferno** has been exposed, revealing, among other things, physics-enabled demon penises. Lovely. An animated film based on the game is also being released in February on DVD and Blu-ray. Interplay's **Fallout MMO** is still in development, despite Bethesda's attempts to halt the project from the series' original publishers. Whether or not it comes to consoles remains to be seen, but we're hopeful.

Still waiting patiently for **Gran Turismo 5**? Then you'll be overjoyed to know that Polyphony have confirmed a summer 2010 release for the West. Will they keep their promise this time? Making more progress is **God Of War 3**, which is apparently 'complete' according to Sony. Now it's all about tweaking and refining until the game is finally released in March.

Developer A2M is releasing a game about a murderous stuffed toy called **Naughty Bear**. Apparently, the more 'devious and maniacal' you are, the more 'Naughty Points' you earn. *What?* 2K Games may be ditching their **NHL 2K** series. The expected 2011 sequel was curiously absent from their release of upcoming games. The name **Ghost Recon Future Soldier** has been trademarked by Ubisoft, hinting at the series' direction for its incoming sequels. See our 2010 feature for more speculation. Finally, ambitious shooter **Dust 514** will constantly expand with regular add-ons, just like the developer's MMO EVE Online. "We have plans to expand the game twice a year." reveals CCP's creative director Atli Mar Sveinsson.

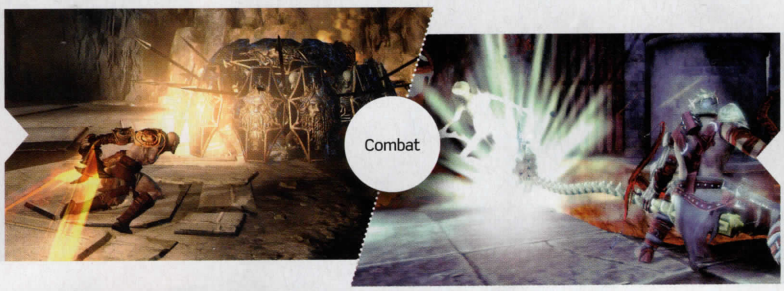
Clone war The *Battlefield*-style Star Wars game has been cast, according to insiders.

"It's a game that tries to make emotion more important"
Heavy Rain page 16

>Head to Head<
God Of War III vs Dante's Inferno

We go hands-on with 2010's biggest slashers - and put them head to head in a true battle of the gods

Combat



GOW3

Kratos's scrapping skills are as brutal as they are beautiful. Fast and fluid, combining attacks feels fantastic as your fiery blades slice through poor souls. Holding L1 and hitting 'square' for example results in a fearsome whirlwind of flames, racking up massive combos.

Rating: ■■■■□

DANTE'S

Dante's axe has a satisfyingly weighty feel – responding like a heavy hunk of metal is really being wielded. On the flipside, it feels slow and lacks the silkiness of Kratos' blades. Plenty of combo options, but it doesn't quite nail the feel of frenzied fighting.

Rating: ■■■□□

Visuals

GOW3

Deep dark gloom is set alight with the burning beauty of Kratos' blades. Blood sometimes looks more spilt jam than flowing liquid, but the big boss' (literally) eye-popping detail lays any graphical doubts to rest. Even Kratos himself is rippled with finely detailed scratches and scars.

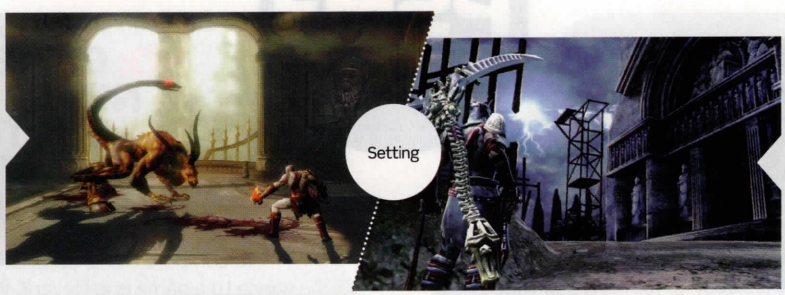
Rating: ■■■■■

DANTE'S

It looks good, just not great. Dante's armour is covered in little scratches and patterns, the enemies rife with awful/awesome gory touches. But environments, whilst varied and gruesome enough, feel a little bland and lacking in polish.

Rating: ■■■□□

Setting



GOW3

Dark, vast and suitably mythical, Kratos' world feels truly fleshed out. From fiery chariots burning through the skies to the freakish winged things gliding menacing overhead, it all feels part of a hellishly intricate ancient Greek universe.

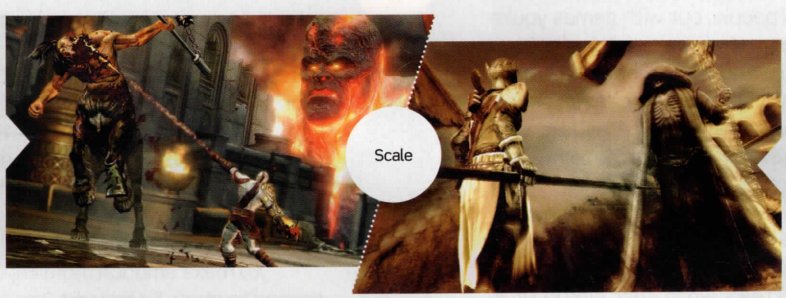
Rating: ■■■■□

DANTE'S

Inferno's hellish underworld is the game's strongest selling-point. Religious iconography inventively litters each area, like a giant cross narrowly missing us and forming a chasm-crossing platform. When Dante first falls into the bowels of hell – for a split second - you feel his fear.

Rating: ■■■■■

Scale



GOW3

Epic. Each environment makes Kratos' considerable bulk seem small and insignificant. Each boss is somehow bigger than the last, from charging ram to gigantic, building-smashing rock-beast. *GOWIII* is going to be huge in every way.

Rating: ■■■■□

DANTE'S

In the opening moments, a flaming ship smashes into the very building you're slicing up soldiers, forming the platform to progress from. Bosses are big and suitably badass. But while it's impressive, it's not inspiring.

Rating: ■■■□□

Gore

GOW3

Blood pours, bosses are savaged viciously, enemies tear gruesomely limb from limb. One seriously nasty section had us rip the eyeball from the socket of a Cyclops, with no sickening detail spared. In another, Kratos tears the head from a screaming soldier. Savage, if not original.

Rating: ■■■■□

DANTE'S

One neat section had us wrestle a gleaming scythe from Death's bony fingers, before turning the weapon on its owner, splitting him straight down the middle. Killing enemies is gratuitous enough, but it can't match Kratos, blow for bloody blow.

Rating: ■■■■□

And the winner is...

GOD OF WAR III

The devil's in the details – though EA's effort is a damn good stab at Kratos-aping slashery, *God of War III* is marginally superior. As technically marvellous as it is bloody good fun, every aspect feels polished, epic and addictive.

Does Heavy Rain really get you emotionally involved?

David Cage's opus sparks another heated team debate...

The PSM3 Debate

YES: GAMES CAN EVOKE EMOTION AS WELL AS ANY OTHER MEDIUM

To be emotionally stirred by a video game, you have to be willing to suspend your disbelief. It's easy to fool yourself that a film is real, because it stars *real* people, but with games you're always conscious that what's in front of you is nothing but a mass of pixels generated by a machine. And who cares about a pixel?

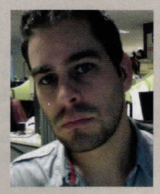
But I don't see pixels when I play games. I'm not even conscious that I'm holding a controller. I invest myself in the world, and everything that happens to my avatar is happening to *me*; all thanks to that crucial suspension of disbelief.

Like the scene in *Heavy Rain* in which Ethan watches his son die in a tragic traffic accident, and his ensuing depression; a very real situation that's genuinely upsetting.

That's also why I leaked literal tears when Aeris died in *Final Fantasy VII*. Or reeled with shock at the end of *Silent Hill 2*. And when the Auditore family are wrongly executed at the beginning of *Assassin's Creed 2*, I was just as thirsty for vengeance as Ezio. My emotions mirrored his, because I yielded myself to the developers and *believed* in the fiction.

So while games have a long way to go before they can match the narrative complexity of movies, they're still capable of rousing emotions – if you *let* them. Michael didn't *really* kill Fredo at the end of The Godfather Part 2, but it still hits you hard, because you chose to believe that they're *real* people. **Andy Kelly**

Andy Kelly is Features Editor on PSM3. According to *Heavy Rain*, his son hates him, and has gone to bed starving and alone.



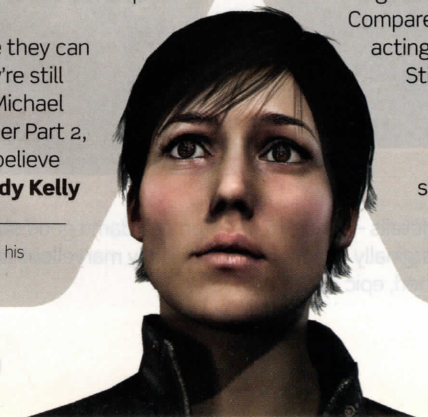
NO: GAMES WILL NEVER EVOKE EMOTION AS EFFECTIVELY AS FILMS OR BOOKS

To compare the emotional interaction that you get from a movie to a game is irrelevant. When I watch a film, I'm there to become involved with the characters; to be entertained by the narrative. But when I play a game? There's a lot more going on. I'm there to succeed, to finish the level, to survive, to reap the Trophies. And that *always* comes down to me pushing the correct combination of buttons at the right time. Narrative comes second – a game that's mechanically sound but has a rubbish plot will entertain you, but one that's well-written but a glitchy mess? It's still a chore to play.

Heavy Rain is an interesting example. It's a game that tries to make emotion more important, where mechanics come second to story. So how did David Cage attempt this? By casting Hollywood actors and using shots taken from film school. That's fine – but if *Heavy Rain* exists purely to evoke emotion and not test traditional gamer skills we need to forget about those 'it's good... *for a game*' excuses. That's where *Heavy Rain* fails. Compare it to a movie – even a slightly rubbish one – and the acting, plot, and pace falls apart. Sorry Cage: it's the truth. Stick to your multi-player for real human emotion – the anger, the sorrow, the thrills, the laughter.

I might get intrigued by game narratives and get a sense of satisfaction from filling in the gaps, but I'll stick to movies for the real tears, thanks. **Owen Hill**

Owen Hill is Production Editor on PSM3. According to *Heavy Rain*, he's an excellent dad who feeds his son and tucks him in at night.



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15
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Use PS3 game saves

We have complete saves for most of the big games. Some games don't let you copy save files, but the ones that do we feature on the disc. To use them you'll need to copy them to a USB stick, then to your PS3. For a more detailed step by step guide, see the bottom of page 6.

Watch HD Trailers

To watch HD files of the hottest upcoming games, insert side B into your PS3, go to 'Video', select the disc and press △. Choose 'Display all' from the menu, highlight the trailers you want to copy, then download them to your HDD. PSM3 is the *only* mag that offers true HD vids.

And there's more...

And it doesn't end there. We've got loads of magazine features you can view in high resolution on your PS3. Follow the instructions for the HD trailers, but under 'Pictures' instead. We also have a buyer's guide, with reviews of every PS3 game to date, and wallpapers.

Plus listen to every PSM3 Podcast

To find an archive of all 22 iTunes chart-smashing PSM3 podcasts, go to the folder 'podcasts' on side B of your disc. That's 44 hours of hot podcast chat, wild opinions, ill-advised impressions and heated debate. To listen, follow the HD movie instructions above, but go to 'Music' instead. You can even listen to them *on* your PS3!

"The changes here are anything but slight"
Super Street Fighter IV page 20

Final Fantasy XIII: The first two hours

Our man in Japan is playing it now. Here's what he thinks so far...

So, it's finally out. After years of anticipation, Japan has taken the day off work to get to grips with the first current-gen instalment of the *Final Fantasy* franchise. Was it worth the wait? It depends on how much you like cut-scenes.

Linearity concerns

Main characters Lightning, Snow, Sazh and friends are rendered in such detail that you can see the lines on their lips and the patterns on the soles of their shoes. There's still a confusingly grand plot peppered with inter-character bickering across the opening hours though, don't worry. It's classic *Final Fantasy*.

It's stuffed with cut-scenes so lengthy they can be paused or skipped, with handy save points presented at the end. In a series that has been famed for its eye candy, *FFXIII* is one of the most visually rich games ever to grace PS3.

The game's course is entirely linear, so while the player-controlled camera offers the illusion of depth of field, in fact you can only really keep moving in one direction. Battle encounters start out limited, though they will no doubt open up through the course of the game as new elements are introduced in the tutorials (we hope you have a big TV screen, as the tiny font is barely visible to the naked eye).

Early on, the ATB Gauge is introduced. The length of your gauge determines how many attacks you can string together in encounters. Combos are key to dispatching enemies quickly, as consecutive hits raise their Break Gauge; when it's full, they glow red and your hits do more damage. It's quite some hours before the game's levelling and Optima systems are introduced. For now, battles are repetitive and easily won. But they sure do look nice. And let's face it, that's the reason the majority of the Japanese public are skiving off work to play *Final Fantasy* anyway...

Lightning storm Predictably, the game looks beautiful.

Off-radar games you don't love yet... but will

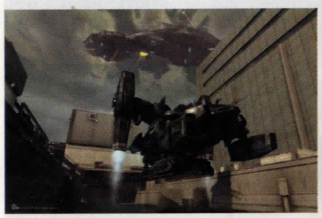
Revealed: Tomorrow's potential classics. Today

PSP Half-Minute Hero Save the world in thirty seconds

Details **Pub** Rising Star Games | **Dev** Opus | **Genre** RPG

Lowdown Take a sprawling JRPG and play it thirty seconds at a time. That's *Half-Minute Hero*. The four modes on offer all demand quick, tactical thinking, and a certain knowledge of old-school J-RPGs. Wizard mode involves mashing monsters to protect said magic man, Hero mode asks players to spend gold to extend the adventure, and Evil Lord mode is an RTS in miniature. But whatever way you play it, when the clock hits zero, it's game over. Quirky 8-bit graphics and sweet bursts of bus-friendly strategy make this a hot prospect for PSP enthusiasts. The Japanese version is available on import now, the UK release is due in Feb.

ETA February

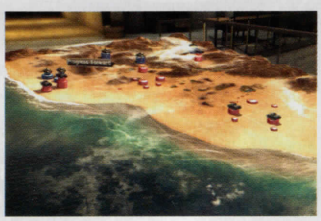


PS3 Dust 514 Merging two worlds in one universe

Details **Pub** CCP Games | **Dev** CCP Games | **Genre** MMOFPS

Lowdown *EVE Online*'s massively multi-player outer-space world is soon to be infiltrated by gun-toting PS3 gamers. A huge console FPS set in the PC MMO's universe, *DUST* looks to bring two communities together in a unique, explosive way. Ship captains from the *EVE* world can call on console-based backup – *DUST* players – as FPS infantry to fight for their galactic dominion from the ground. It looks fresh, clever, and a great twist on the saturated FPS genre.

ETA 2010



PS3 RUSE Be a legendary armchair general. Or just fake it

Details **Pub** Ubisoft | **Dev** Eugen | **Genre** RTS

Lowdown Console gamers usually get a raw deal when it comes to RTS games but *RUSE* is going to be different. Instead of requiring players to click 70 times a minute, *RUSE* places less emphasis on micro-managing and more on overall tactics. It's all made even more interesting by the addition of 'Ruses' – devious power-ups that allow you to trick your opponents into thinking your forces are situated in different areas of the map. You can even order around decoys or make your powerful tanks looks like puny soldiers.

ETA 2010

PS3 Super Street Fighter IV Ken do attitude

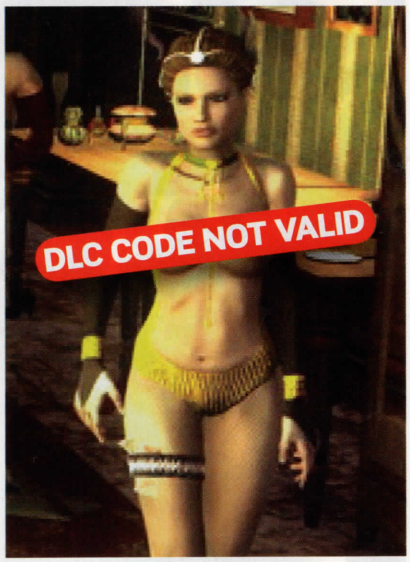
Details **Pub** Capcom | **Dev** Capcom | **Genre** 2D Fighter

Lowdown Capcom like to make slight changes to their best games (see *Resi 5: Gold Edition*). But the changes here are anything but slight. Online team elimination battles for up to eight players, winner-stays-on arcade style scraps and a full-fledged replay channel to show off your best beatings. Not only that, there's a clutch of new and updated characters, stages and an improved combo system. This will be the ultimate fighter.

ETA Spring

The Optimist

Don't worry. Be happy



One-use DLC codes in new releases? Yes please!

Forget piracy; the most evil parts of the games industry are those dirty, underhand retailers who have the cheek to flog pre-owned games. When specialist shops have the audacity to sell old games for a slightly reduced price, *something* has to be done.

Thankfully, the ever brave and righteous Electronic Arts have stepped up. You may have noticed their games increasingly being bundled with codes to unlock pieces of DLC – these are one-use only, meaning people who buy the games pre-owned will have to pay to access the extra content. *Dragon Age: Origins* has additional quests and characters, while *The Saboteur*'s code removes the nipple tassels from the game's bawdy house girls.

It's a con-tent

This is obviously brilliant. Buy the game new and you get some extra stuff, and in doing so you screw over all those horrible poor people who shuffle to the counter of GAME and buy *used* copies.

Sure, paranoid people think this content is being deliberately withheld from the main game to make legitimate second-hand customers pay more for stuff that should have been theirs in the first place, but who cares? A game like *Dragon Age* is so ridiculously big that we should be grateful to developers for taking quests off our plate, and thankful for the opportunity to support starving publishers by paying money to unlock tits.

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What do you think of paid DLC?
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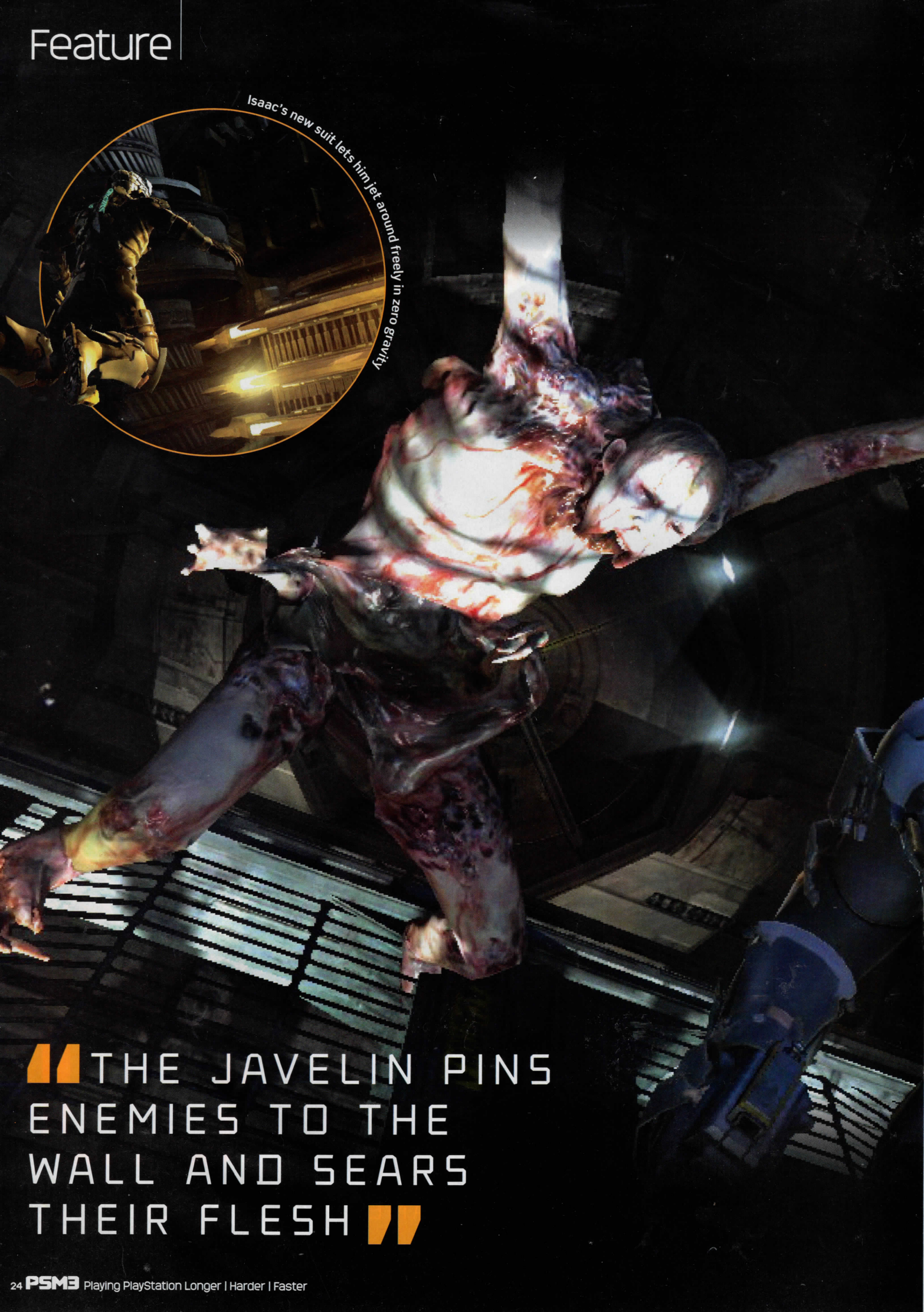
WHAT'S NEXT 2010

DEAD SPACE 2 KICKS OFF OUR NEW-YEAR PREVIEW

FOR PS3?

10

SPECIAL WITH EVERY PS3 GAME THAT MATTERS...



Isaac's new suit lets him jet around freely in zero gravity

"THE JAVELIN PINS ENEMIES TO THE WALL AND SEARS THEIR FLESH"

Pub EA **Dev** Visceral Games **ETA** October

DEAD SPACE 2

NEW SUIT. NEW CITY. NEW INTENSITY.

01

The Sprawl is like any other human city. It has schools, churches and shopping malls – it just happens to be 94,000,000 miles from Earth and built on the *rings of Saturn*. Pretty epic as fantastical video game settings go, and a much more varied environment to soil with alien blood than the Ishimura.

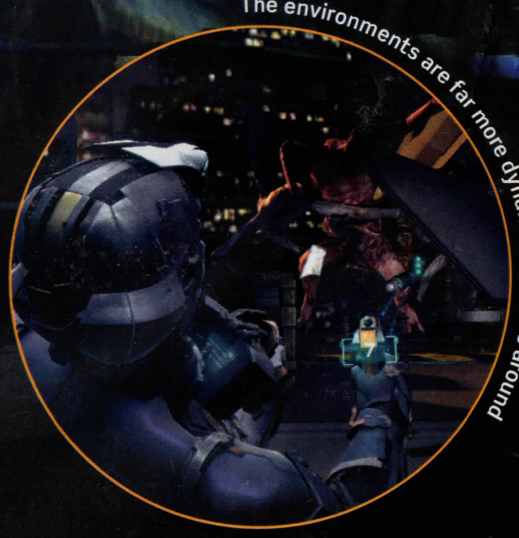
Yes, the Necromorphs are back – those fiendish parasites that infect corpses and turn them into macabre monsters. The developers are remaining tight-lipped about the plot, but we do know that Isaac Clarke, unlikely hero of the first game, is alive and well, arriving at The Sprawl just as the Necromorphs attack the city.

Unlucky. But this time he's packing more heat than a few power tools. New weapons include the Javelin, which pins an enemy to the wall then sears their flesh with flames. And you've got a new suit, too. Isaac's ergonomic RIG 2.0 comes with jets that let him propel himself freely through zero gravity. No more being locked to surfaces by magnetic boots or pre-set jumps.

Another new feature of the suit is a retractable mask. In safe areas (The Sprawl hasn't been completely overrun at the start) it folds away to reveal Isaac's face. And not only that, he *speaks* and interacts with locals. Visceral are trying to turn him into a fully-fledged character, rather than an empty vessel for the player, which *should* give the story more depth – depending on the quality of the script. Equally, it could feel unnecessary. It's the only thing about this horror sequel we're wary of.

Under pressure

Wherever the Necromorphs tread disaster follows, and The Sprawl is falling to pieces. This gives the developers a chance to play with zero gravity, and they're promising more puzzles between the action this time.



The environments are far more dynamic this time around

However, in certain sections, destroying the city *yourself* can have a tactical advantage. Picture this: you're in a glass-walled corridor, and there's a swarm of Necromorphs at the end. You're low on ammo and can't take them all on by yourself – what do you do?

Shoot the glass. The air rushes out and the fiends shriek as they're sucked out into the blackness of space. And as you're about to meet the same fate, you aim your plasma cutter at an emergency lock. Hit it and a shutter slams shut, and pressure in the room is restored. Careful, though; time it wrong and the shutter will cut Isaac in half. Ouch.

Completely armless

It's this kind of dynamic environment design that will elevate *Dead Space 2* above its predecessor. 'Strategic dismemberment' is back, obviously, letting you slice enemies to pieces, but now you can do the same to objects – slicing them in half with your plasma cutter to clear a path. It's enough to make the first game's environments seem static.

Oh, and there's multi-player, but Visceral haven't revealed anything about it yet besides 'you'll be able to dismember your friends'. An *Uncharted 2*-style deathmatch with laser cutters sounds good to us. So start getting excited about *Dead Space 2* now, because it's going to be amazing, short of some spectacular screw up at Visceral. It's scarier, bigger, and nastier, and The Sprawl sounds like a great setting. Let's hope they don't turn Isaac into a jerk, eh? No one-liners, no Nolan North (voice of Drake) – keep it classy, Visceral.

"IT MAKES THE FIRST GAME'S ENVIRONMENTS SEEM STATIC"

Slice as nice *Dead Space*'s dismemberment mechanic adds extra depth to the gameplay.

Pub Capcom Dev Capcom ETA Summer

LOST PLANET 2

TWO NEW GLOWING MONSTERS REVEALED

02 Since the last game, *Lost Planet*'s Akrids have evolved. Capcom recently revealed new creatures – the Defolma is a six-tentacled monster that hides in tight spaces and snatches you into its waiting jaws, while the Debouse is a giant horse with enormous ears and razor sharp teeth. Suitably challenging for this co-op focused shooter then (despite the red weak spots).

Pub EA Dev Crytek ETA TBC 2010

CRYSIS 2

GET READY FOR SOME HOT MAN-ON-MANGROVE ACTION

03 Frustratingly, there's been nothing new on *Crysis 2* since the tech demo shown off at E3 2009. We do know that development of this tropical FPS is happening simultaneously across the three platforms (PS3, 360 and PC) so we won't get a dodgy *Orange Box*-style port. Full reveal next issue.

Mid-life Crysis This *could* end up the best-looking game on PS3.

PSM3 RECKONS

Could be one of 2010's best shooters, but while the original slipped under the radar before gaining cult status, will the hype for its sequel lessen the impact? Regardless, we're loving the new living city setting.

Pub Square Enix Dev Square Enix ETA March

FINAL FANTASY XIII

ALREADY RECEIVING MAXIMUM ACCLAIM IN JAPAN, FFXIII LOOKS SET TO BE WORTH THE WAIT

04 If it's felt like forever, that's because it has been. Originally announced at E3 2006, *Final Fantasy XIII* continues Square Enix's trend for gradually increasing the development time between Final Fantasies. But the wait's nearly over, and arguably the biggest RPG of the year – and perhaps the most visually magnificent game of 2010 – is almost upon us.

Classic lore

Set in the world of Pulse, *XIII* tells the story of the godlike fal'Cie and their human avatars the l'Cie, which the rest of humanity fear as being harbingers of the apocalypse. Y'see, humanity is locked up in the technologically advanced fortress Cocoon, which floats above Pulse and is ruled over by the theocratic and l'Cie-fearing Sanctum. Naturally, all the playable characters are l'Cie, who have been gifted with summonable Eidolons to help them in their mission to assist the fal'Cie. Confusing. So far, so *Final Fantasy* then.

But how does it play? Well, think of it as the lessons of *Final Fantasy X* and *XII* meshed together with the dynamism of the fight scenes in the glorified fan service that was the *Final Fantasy VII* Advent Children CGI film.

The series' traditional summons see a new twist with Gestalt Mode, in which they transform into vehicles, allowing characters to either ride or bond with them to inflict further damage via some manic button-mashing. Sure, it's a little weird, but, after all, this is a series known for its frequently cross-dressing protagonists, Moogles, and perpetually running cartoon cacti.

PSM3 RECKONS

With rave reviews in Japan, *FFXIII* might not be a bold new direction for the series but it's shaping up to be a killer RPG. Read our hands on impressions now at psm3mag.com and look out for a full review next issue.

SKATE 3

MORE STICK-FLICKING

Pub EA Dev Black Box ETA May

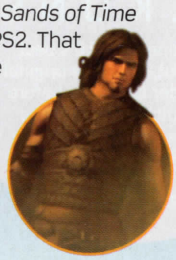
05 No dodgy board add-ons here, but EA is trying to innovate, pushing the multi-player element hard this time around. Gamers will be able to create crews of skaters both online and off and challenge other teams for career progress. It's looking like setting the bar for boarding brilliance once more.

PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE FORGOTTEN SANDS

RE-REINVENTED AGAIN

Pub Ubisoft Dev Ubisoft ETA May

06 The Prince's latest outing looks to revisit the *Sands of Time* trilogy from PS2. That means a return to the time-slowing, sword-wielding Prince of old (who now looks like Jake Gyllenhaal), and more trad platforming.

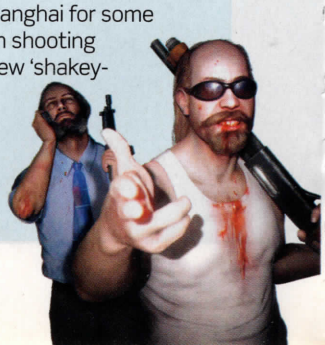


KANE AND LYNCH 2: DOG DAYS

SHADY SHANGHAI CAPERS

Pub Square Enix Dev IO ETA 2010

07 Details are as dark and grainy as the setting for Kane and Lynch's next outing, but we know the crime duo's return will see the pair heading to Shanghai for some brutal third-person shooting action. Plus, the new 'shakey-cam' visual style looks to add an element of cheap snuff film to the proceedings.



Pub Activison Dev Treyarch ETA Nov

CALL OF DUTY'S FUTURE

10

The date

We know the next *Call of Duty* will be handled by Treyarch, that it won't be another *Modern Warfare* game, and that it will release some time in November 2010 (we'll take a guess and predict November 12).

The setting

We reckon either Vietnam or Korea is a likely setting for this game. Why? Well, *Call of Duty* has pretty much exhausted the WW2 setting, and Treyarch – by creating lush jungle / tight caves / beaches for the Pacific campaign in *World At War* – already have the basic art materials for a decent 'Nam campaign. They even pioneered the use of flame (napalm anyone) during their last game. We'll also put good money on *Nazi Zombies* from *World At War* making an appearance.

A massive deal

That's not all though. Way back in May 2008, Activision CEO Bobby Kotick talked about creating MMOs (Massively Multi-player Online) versions of the publisher's key franchises, but all has been quiet on the subject since. That is, until the LA Times slipped in a nugget of info at the end of it's *Modern Warfare 2* launch story, claiming to have an insider tip from someone within Activision that the publisher was seriously looking into a *Call of Duty* MMO (11) – it makes sense considering the new-found interest in the genre on consoles. Our prediction? Expect a teaser via the Blizzard arm of the company at E3, but no release until at least 2011.

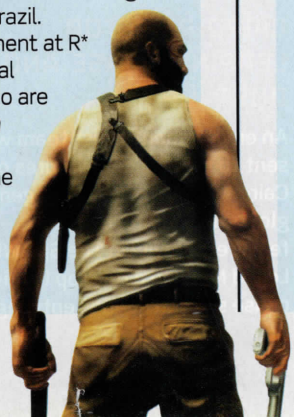
MAX PAYNE 3

BEARDS AND BULLET-TIME

Pub Rockstar Dev Rockstar ETA Autumn

08

Grizzled cop Max Payne has moved from the snowy streets of New York to the twisting alleys of Sao Paulo, Brazil. Currently in development at R* Vancouver, not original creators Remedy (who are busy working on *Alan Wake*), the game recently slipped to the second half of the year. Bullet time and strong language are certainties...



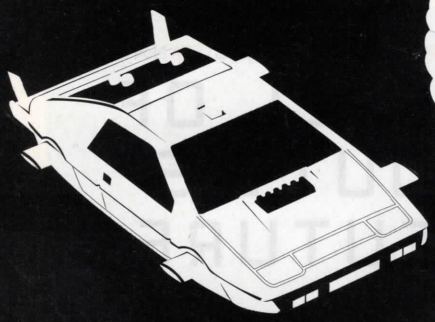
GHOST RECON AW3

HARDCORE MODERN WAR

Pub Ubisoft Dev Ubisoft ETA 2010

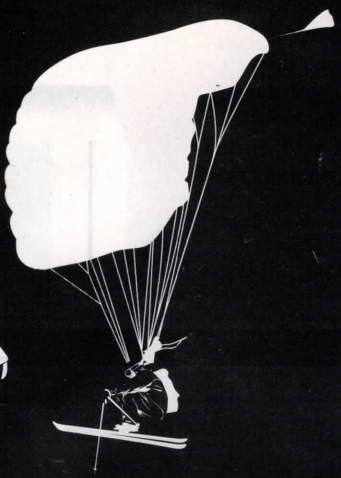
09

What can we expect from a new *GRAW*? More of the same hardcore action set in the not-too-distant future. *COD* has the arcade shooter sewn up, but we reckon the new *GRAW* could take *Op Flashpoint*'s crown as the thinking-man's FPS of choice. Also, we expect *MAG*-style 'large-scale' skirmishes, tying the franchise together with the underrated *EndWar*.



LOTUS ESPRIT GOES UNDERWATER AND COPTER CHASE!

You can't make a 1970s spy game without a Lotus Esprit that goes underwater and fires rockets. While Rockstar can't rip it off directly, a set-piece driving section like the chase in *MGS4* with direct control, would rock.

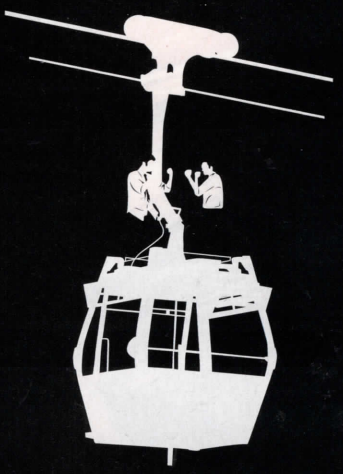


THE SKI CHASE WITH THE ICONIC CLIFFTOP PARACHUTE JUMP

The Spy Who Loved Me's (1977) legendary intro is perfect video game material; from the reflex-intensive skiing, to the on-the-fly rifle work and iconic, tech-pushing, parachute jump. Motion-wand ski poles, anyone?

ETIQUETTE-FREE MASS BRAWLS IN FAR EASTERN DOJOS

The Man With The Golden Gun (1974) shamelessly pandered to the emergence of 1970s kung fu flicks, but the idea of a bad-ass, super agent defying etiquette and rough-housing a room full of martial artists certainly appeals.



A BATTLE WITH JAWS ON THE TOP OF A CABLE CAR

Moonraker (1979) jumps the shark – poetically, at least – when, er, Jaws jets into space in the movie's finale, but 007's scrap with the metal-mouthed giant on top of a cable car in Rio is a scenic masterpiece.

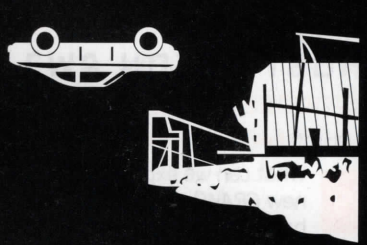
12 007 BOND SCENES WE WANT IN...

AGENT

WHY ROCKSTAR'S GLOBE-TROTTING 1970S SPY EPIC COULD BE 'THE ULTIMATE ACTION GAME'

CHOPPER DROP A WHEELCHAIR VILLAIN INTO A CHIMNEY

For Your Eyes Only (1981) kicks off with Bond hooking Blofeld onto his helicopter, then dropping him into a chimney. Absurd – but precision helicopter sections are a *GTA* staple, and near certain for *Agent*.



360° CORKSCREW STUNT JUMP IN A CAR OVER A RIVER

As seen in The Man With The Golden Gun, where Bond thunders his car over a rickety bridge, rotating 360°. *GTA IV*'s relatively complex car physics would make racing/stunt sections a challenging must.

CAIRO ROOFTOP LEAPING CHASE AND DUST-UP

An environment artist team was sent to take 10,000 pictures of Cairo, which tallies with *Agent*'s globe-trotting focus. Cairo features heavily in The Spy Who Loved Me, and a rooftop leaping chase section sounds enticing.

Pub Bethesda Dev Splash Damage ETA Autumn

BRINK

GET BRIBED TO PLAY PROPERLY

13

Brink blends single-player, co-op and multi-player by offering a solid sci-fi story that you can blast through on your own, with mates or – and here's the clever part – with mates, against other players. But the true beauty lies in the execution. *Brink* uses a system that monitors what's happening during each level and sets you objectives accordingly. So, if you're not progressing your team's story, the game will offer you more XP for tackling story-based objectives. It's the kind of bribe that appeals to your inner level-grinder.

There are so many smart ideas being poured into *Brink* that you'd be a fool not to put it straight on your watch-list.

PSM3 RECKONS

Even without the clever online integration and RPG features, this looks like a great shooter. If all the elements come together it could be something truly special that re-invents what we expect of online shooters.

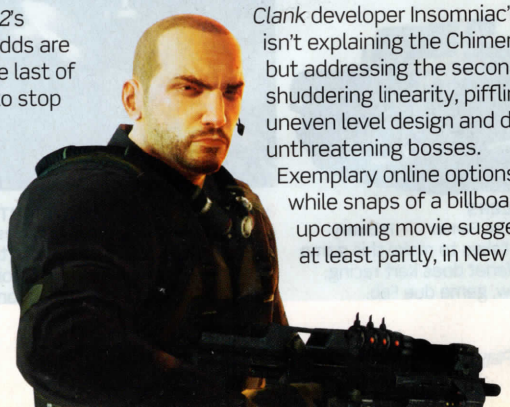
Pub Sony Dev Insomniac ETA 2010

RESISTANCE 3

NEW YORK, NEW HERO AND A NEW VILLAIN... NATHAN HALE?

14

"They're calling to us... it's beautiful. This is just the beginning!" growls Nathan Hale at the end of *Resistance 2*, before being shot by US Sentinel Joseph Capelli. Is Hale dead? Unlikely – but he might play *Resistance 3*'s villain, having been consumed by the Chimera virus and, perhaps, adopting the persona of *R2*'s antagonist Daedalus. Odds are you'll play as Capelli, the last of the Sentinels, trying to stop Hale from fully resurrecting the Chimera and mankind's unwanted final evolution. *Ratchet & Clank* developer Insomniac's problem isn't explaining the Chimera's origin; but addressing the second game's shuddering linearity, piffling weapons, uneven level design and dull, unthreatening bosses.



Exemplary online options are assured, while snaps of a billboard from an upcoming movie suggest it'll be set, at least partly, in New York.

MORE NEW GAMES

DOGS, ZOMBIES AND FACE-HUGGERS...

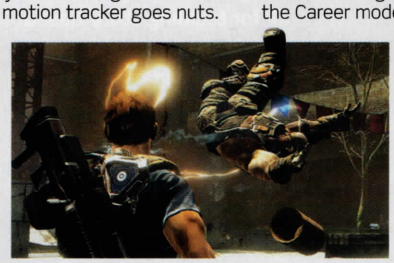
15 GUITAR HERO 6
Pub Activision Dev Neversoft ETA Sept
Yes, the upgrades will be incremental, the track list debatable and new features minimal. But it'll still be the best one yet. Hopefully the *GH6* kit will come with *Band Hero*'s instruments.

16 ALIENS: COLONIAL MARINES
Pub Sega Dev Gearbox ETA 2010
This horror shooter has chilling atmosphere, especially when you're waiting for an Alien assault and the motion tracker goes nuts.

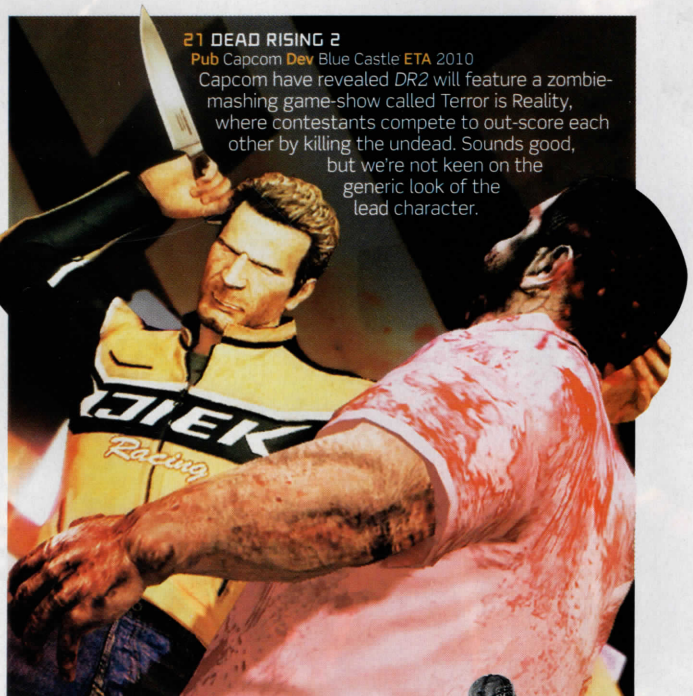
17 UFC 2010
Pub THQ Dev Yuke's Osaka ETA 2010
2009 saw a fun but flawed foray into *UFC*, so we have high hopes that Yuke's will fix up the Career mode and tighten the controls.

18 SAINT'S ROW 3
Pub THQ Dev Volition ETA 2010
Expect more sandbox madness and plenty of character customisation. We reckon video-sharing of your antics is a cert too.

19 BLUR
Pub Activision Dev Bizarre Creations ETA 2010
Blur sees furious arcade racing in real-world locales with licensed motors. Shoddy showing at E3 2009, but could improve.



20 INVERSION
Pub Namco Bandai Dev Saber Interactive ETA 2010
'The Grappler' is a dull name for *Inversion*'s cool toy. With it puzzles can be solved, enemies grabbed and gravity influenced.



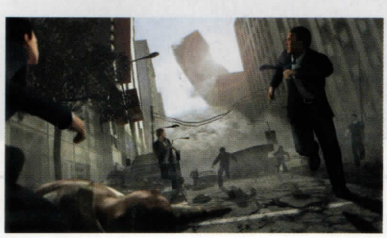
21 DEAD RISING 2
Pub Capcom Dev Blue Castle ETA 2010
Capcom have revealed *DR2* will feature a zombie-mashing game-show called Terror is Reality, where contestants compete to out-score each other by killing the undead. Sounds good, but we're not keen on the generic look of the lead character.

22 MX VS ATV REFLEX
Pub THQ Dev Rainbow Studios ETA February
Mud, stupidly fast bikes and sky-high jumps means little is as manly as *MX vs ATV*. New controls should make this feel fresh.

23 MADDEN NFL 11
Pub EA Dev EA ETA September
Last year's offering was the best yet and polishing near-perfection rarely ends badly, so the onus is on EA not to muck this up.

24 ALPHA PROTOCOL
Pub Sega Dev Obsidian Entertainment ETA 2010
Obsidian's spy RPG lets you choose the way you play thanks to insane character depth and a complex, branching story-line.

25 NIER
Pub Square Enix Dev Cavia ETA March
A dark visual style and some creative monster types make this JRPG from the publisher of *Final Fantasy* stand out.



26 I AM ALIVE
Pub Ubisoft Dev Ubisoft ETA 2010
Epic scale, a deep story and an urgent, realistic atmosphere are the hallmarks of this heavily delayed 'disaster' game.

30 MAG
Pub Sony Dev Zipper Interactive ETA January
Perhaps not as polished or as accomplished as *Modern Warfare 2*, but when 255 other players are gunning for your head, you won't have time to care. PS3's first Massively Multi-player Online shooter has just finished Beta, where is has made big steps forward.

27 MODNATION RACERS
Pub Sony Dev United Front Games ETA February
Four words are all it takes to make this game essential: *LittleBigPlanet* does kart racing. Public Beta open now, game due Feb.

28 DEAD TO RIGHTS: RETRIBUTION
Pub Namco Bandai Dev Volatile Games ETA 2010
A cop and his dog (who you get to play as), fighting gangs in a shady neo-noir sandbox city. Generic story, but the action looks ace.

29 STAR OCEAN: THE LAST HOPE
Pub Square Enix Dev tri-Ace ETA 2010
PS3 gets some *Star Ocean* action. Real-time combat is punctuated by beautiful *FFXIII*-style cutscenes filling in the back-story.

Pub Sega Dev Rebellion ETA February

ALIENS VS PRED

A DEADLY THREE-WAY IN SPACE

31 It's the asymmetric multi-player mode that will really set *AvP* apart. Each species has its own unique multi-player mode, and there's co-op survival gameplay to be had. The gore has proved too much for the Aussies, where the game's been denied release.

Overly graphic *Alien vs Predator* isn't a game for the faint-hearted.

Pub Rockstar Dev Rockstar ETA 2010

GTA V IS COMING, AND IT'S SET IN...

34 ...Vice City. Or at least, that's what the smart money says. Rockstar have already teased the next *GTA* inside the manual to *Episodes From Liberty City*. The text on one page reads 'Liberty City, It's Over. Next Stop...' but the remainder of the sentence is torn away (like a ripped billboard), leaving us to stare at part of an image from an advert underneath the page. Oh, how they tease us. But hang on. The advert underneath the ripped part of the poster is for a sex shop in Hove Beach. A sex shop? It isn't too big an intellectual leap to assume that Rockstar are teasing the 'Vice' City angle here.

European shores?

Another theory suggests the rip in the poster corresponds to the coastline of northern France, but this seems to be coincidence. We're not convinced a *GTA Paris* would really work. Other ideas that have been suggested include a *GTA Washington*, and even a *GTA Mexico City*, but neither of these have any supporting evidence.

Either way, analysts are predicting we'll see the game before the end of 2010, and the manual teaser uses the words 'coming in March' – which could point to the announcement date of the new game. Rockstar delight in dotting hidden clues throughout their products, so all this could be a red herring. A tempting, convincing red herring...

Next up Does the poster underneath the torn corner indicate that *GTA V* will be in Vice City? Or should we read more into the shape of the tear?

SUPER STREET FIGHTER IV

EIGHT NEW FIGHTERS

Pub Capcom Dev Capcom ETA 2010

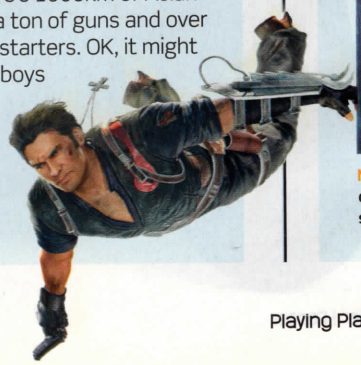
32 The current fighting king's latest entry brings eight more characters, both new and old, an enhanced combo system and improved online. We're not sure it quite qualifies as a full retail release, but for *Street Fighter* fans, this will no doubt be the definitive disc for 2010.

JUST CAUSE 2

AN ISLAND IN THE GUN

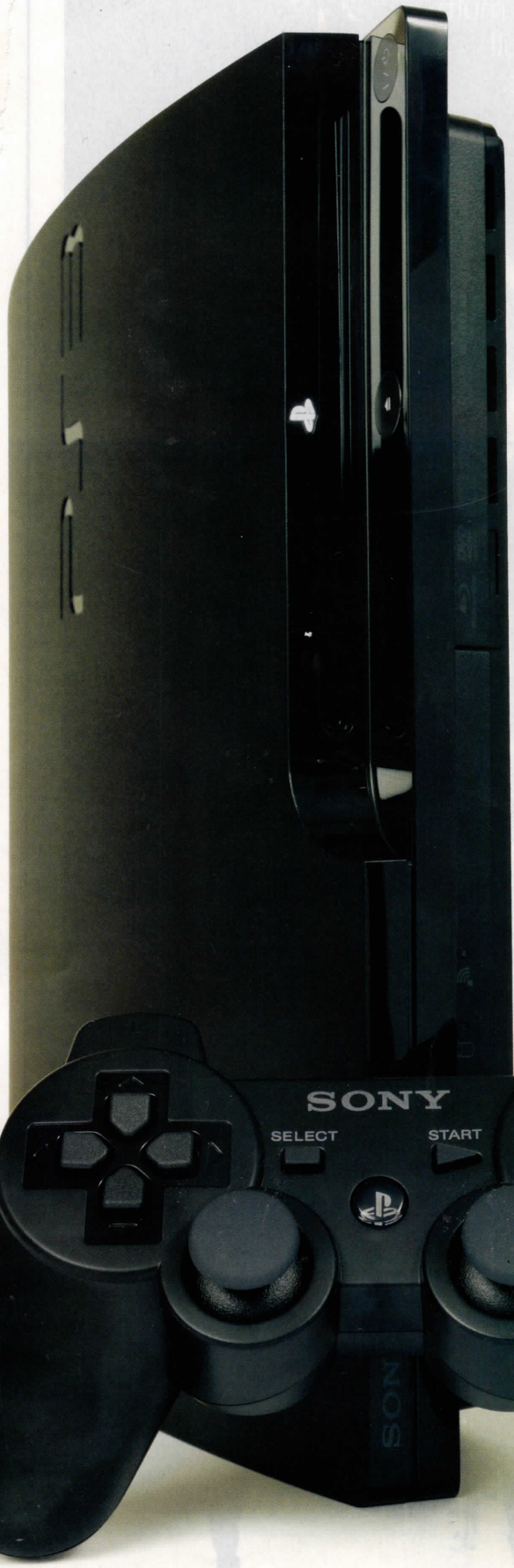
Pub Square Enix Dev Avalanche ETA March

33 More balls-out B-movie than refined blockbuster, *Just Cause 2* looks to improve upon the under-performing original with sheer scale. There's 1000km of Asian sandbox island, a ton of guns and over 100 vehicles for starters. OK, it might not beat the big boys for gameplay polish, but should prove to be one hell of a ride, all the same.



2010 TECH

BECAUSE THE GAME IS JUST THE START...



35 Backwards compatibility

Sony have mentioned PS2 titles on PSN before so we wouldn't be surprised if the old console's early classics like *Ico* hit the network before long. But whilst PS2 still sells, Sony has dismissed reintroducing full backwards compatibility to PS3. The recent addition of Minis emulation suggest that classic PSP titles might be available for PS3 soon – Sony definitely needs to work more PSP titles onto its portable store for Go gamers, so it's not a bad bet.

Also, though it's not confirmed, and it's not official Sony tech, Logitech are looking to give PSP Go its disc drive back. Apart from adding some considerable bulk to the Go's frame, the accessory would grant owners of previous PSP iterations access to their back catalogues. Not only that, but it would give Go gamers a chance to pick up UMD titles on the cheap, even if it isn't a particularly portable solution.

36 New ways to play

PS3's move to motion control is perhaps the most immediate change for the console. The likes of Ubisoft and EA are promising a slew of (as-of-yet secret) releases to utilise the new tech like Capcom's *Resi 5*: Alternate edition. Whilst perhaps a bit 'safer' than Xbox's Natal, the new control scheme has great potential. Plus, an array of recent add-on patents suggest Sony will come up with a tighter control scheme than the awkward DS3/Motion combo.

There's also been talk of a paid for 'way to play' in 2010. Whether paying for all PSN access or just for exclusive extras, a premium PSN looks increasingly likely. Sony's currently free service is one of the PS3's best features – we doubt it will ever get removed entirely. That said, we'd welcome a revamped PSN with extra subscriber functionality, like cross-game chat, a Sky Player, and exclusive PSN downloads.

37 New developments

3D has come a long way since the days of geeky red and blue specs. In fact, 3D gaming *without the glasses* could hit homes in the next five years on special new tellies. Glasses-based 3D gaming will be with us much sooner though, with a 120Hz TV the 'only' requirement, rather than a special set. Games? *GT5* and *WipEout HD* have already been 3D-demoed and we predict that Sony will put 3D games on PSN soon. Aside from the 3D goodness, cross-game party chat is the obvious 'next big feature', even though it might be restricted to paid subscribers.

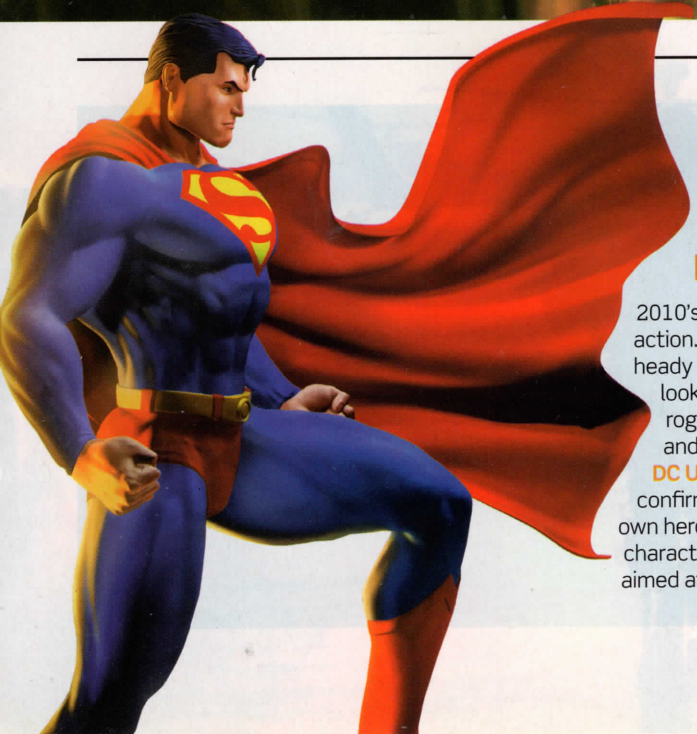
Also, PSP's new comic reader works just like a third-party app, suggesting official third party programs for both PS3 and PSP could be on the way. SCEA boss John Koller hints that Sony's 2010 plans include a lot more features and firmware additions for PS3. Both Spotify and Skype are rumoured to be among the possibilities.

MOTION CONTROLLER GAMES

A NEW WAY OF INTERACTING WITH YOUR PS3

We've seen the future, and it's a stick with a glowing ball on top. Sony's motion controllers, first shown at E3 last year, are due some time in 2010 – but they *still* don't have an official name. A loose-lipped EA employee let slip that their prototype name is 'Gem'.

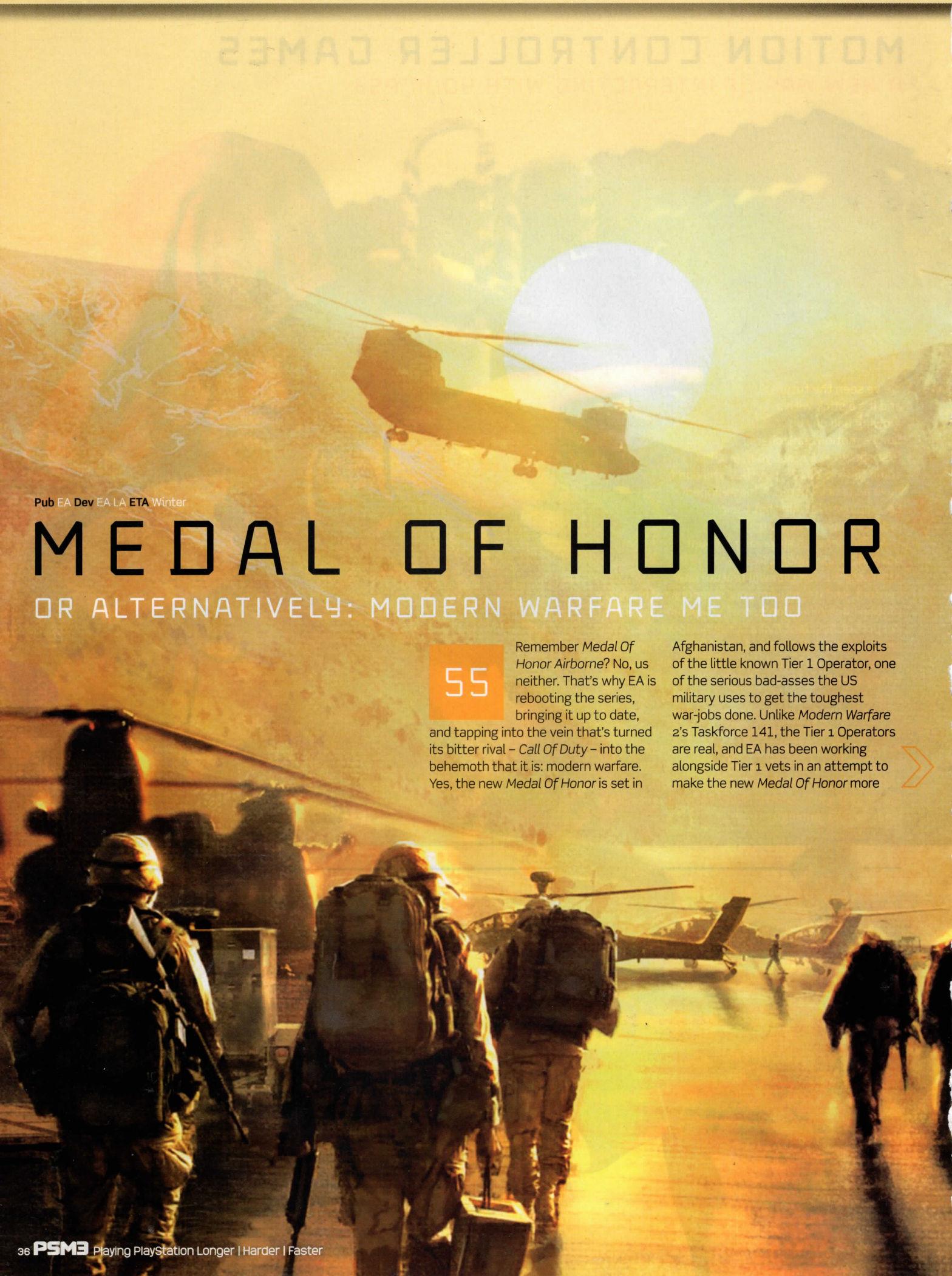
As for games, a surprising amount have been announced. **Resident Evil 5: Alternate Edition** (38) will feature new content, and let you aim your weapons with the motion controller. Don't scoff – Capcom's recent Wii port of *Resident Evil 4* actually worked really well, so we're optimistic about this one. A new **Ape Escape** (39) is also on its way, as well as the family friendly-sounding **Motion Party** (40) and **Sing and Draw** (41). Then there's a sequel to mind-bending puzzler **Echochrome** (42), **Champions of Time** (43) and something called **Mr Pain** (44). These were all revealed in a list at Sony's TGS keynote along with some mysterious titles such as **Under Siege** (45), **Tower** (46), **The Shoot** (47) and **Eccentric Slider** (48). It's an exciting time for PS3 gaming...



MMOS OF 2010

SPIES, SUPERHEROES AND SPACE – IT'S PS3'S BIG YEAR FOR MMOS

2010's set to be a big year for MMO action. For starters, **The Agency**'s (49) heady mix of shooting and spy-craft looks intriguing. Whether elite spy or rogue merc, its contrast of espionage and explosions looks near-essential. **DC Universe Online** (50) is also confirmed. In it, you get to create your own hero or villain in a city populated by DC characters. **Free Realms** (51) is an MMO aimed at younger gamers that's due to hit next year too. Then there's the heavily-hinted PS3 port of **Star Trek Online** (52). It blends on-foot combat with some tactical space battling and looks superb. Jeff Strain (of *Guild Wars* fame) has also announced a console MMO that's set around a **zombie apocalypse** (53) that could hit PS3. We've also heard rumours that console versions of BioWare's next opus, **Star Wars Old Republic** (54) might emerge. Yes please – we call the bounty hunter.



Pub EA **Dev** EA LA **ETA** Winter

MEDAL OF HONOR

OR ALTERNATIVELY: MODERN WARFARE ME TOO

55

Remember *Medal Of Honor Airborne*? No, us neither. That's why EA is rebooting the series, bringing it up to date, and tapping into the vein that's turned its bitter rival – *Call Of Duty* – into the behemoth that it is: modern warfare. Yes, the new *Medal Of Honor* is set in Afghanistan, and follows the exploits of the little known Tier 1 Operator, one of the serious bad-asses the US military uses to get the toughest war-jobs done. Unlike *Modern Warfare* 2's Taskforce 141, the Tier 1 Operators are real, and EA has been working alongside Tier 1 vets in an attempt to make the new *Medal Of Honor* more

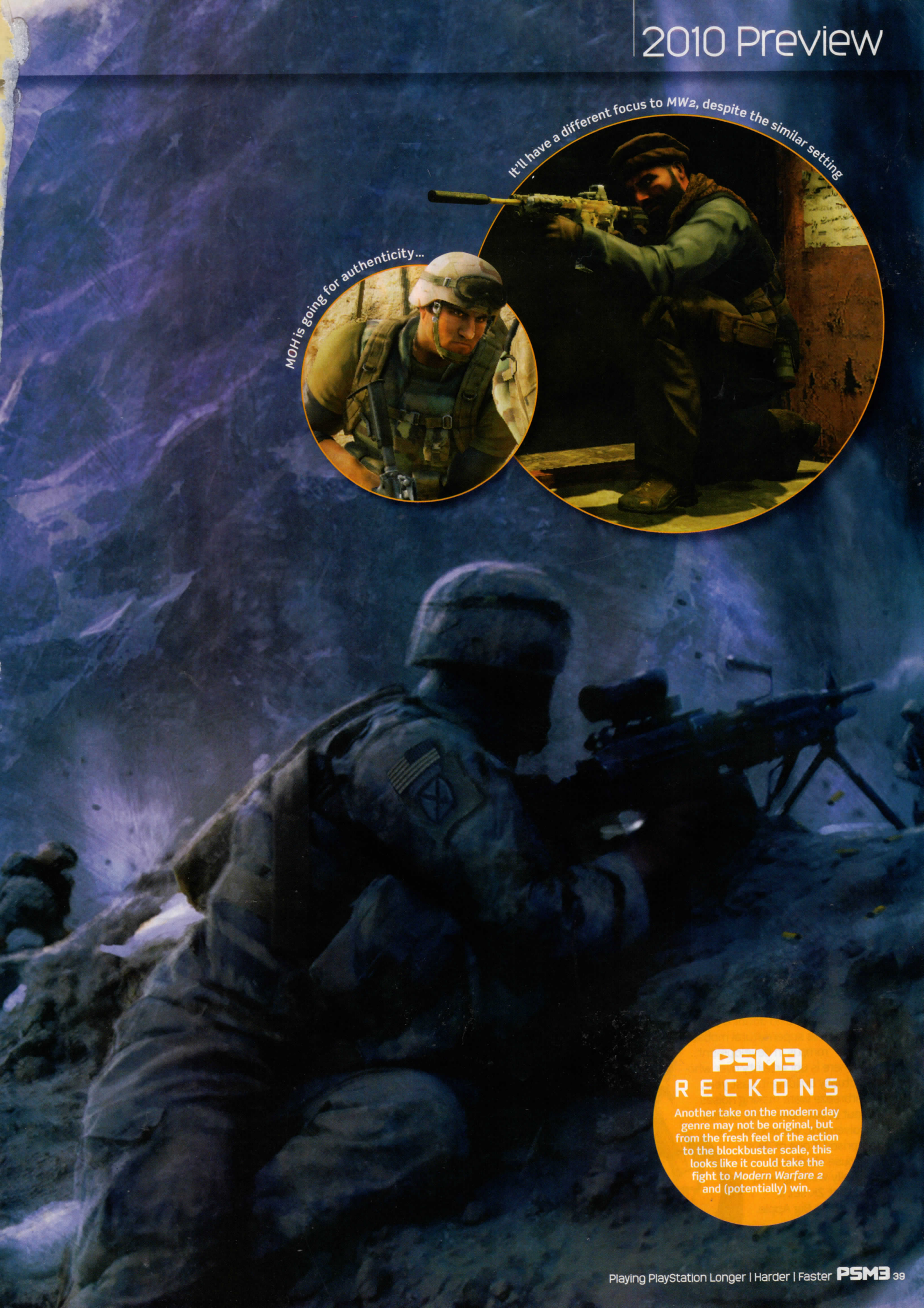
authentic than other shooters.

In addition to the single player campaign, which is in development over at EA LA, the game will – obviously – feature multi-player, which is currently in development over at *Battlefield* studio DICE. Does this mean we'll see the same epic, vehicle-inclusive combat as *Battlefield Bad Company 2* – only with a more *Call Of Duty*-style twitch-shooter feel? It's likely. From the first glimpse of the game at the VGAs, EA truly are bringing the battle to *MW2*. A frenetic mix of aerial, vehicular and on-foot FPS action, it has every aspiration to top Activision's blockbuster. Choppers churn up cliffsides, soldiers burst through bunkers, 4x4s cut through arid battlefields, dodging sniper scopes and breaking defences. It's explosive, intense and a far cry from the fusty old WW2 efforts that used to define *MOH*.

Close to home

The only real question left is whether or not EA will have the balls to match *Modern Warfare 2* in terms of pure shock and awe. After all, the Taliban theme is some dangerous Daily Mail-baiting territory. The developers of the short-lived *Six Days in Fallujah* game fell foul of the ban-hammer, and with this new *Medal Of Honor* set in a conflict that's still managing to make headlines, EA will need to tread a very fine line if they want to avoid potential moral outrage.

"A FRENETIC MIX OF AERIAL, VEHICULAR AND ON-FOOT ACTION"



PSM3 RECKONS

Another take on the modern day genre may not be original, but from the fresh feel of the action to the blockbuster scale, this looks like it could take the fight to *Modern Warfare 2* and (potentially) win.

Pub Sony Dev Santa Monica Studios ETA March

GOD OF WAR 3

"I FELT LIKE I JUST SAW A PLAYSTATION 4 TITLE"

56

"If I had a game coming out at the same time, I'd be very concerned. It's one of the frontrunners for 2010's game of the year." That's a quote from the (usually reserved) US journalist N'Gai Croal minutes after seeing new footage from *GOW3*, which should hit the web in March. The charismatic HipHopGamer felt like he had been watching "a PlayStation 4 title". What with *Bayonetta* raising sexy hell in the battle of the hack 'n' slash epics, *God Of War 3* needs to do something special to stay on top. It's possible Sony's tight-lipped stance might point to some big changes. Will the Titans turn against Kratos – or each other – in a bloody civil war? Will another playable character turn up, possibly Kratos' brother? Perhaps Kratos will be taken down by a vengeful mortal, setting the series up for a new trilogy. The eerie silence around such a major release is unusual, but the combat feels ace, the battles bigger and more brutal – we're crossing our Blades of Chaos for some impressive shocks soon.

PSM3 RECKONS

A limp E3 2009 showing, coupled to the graphically-assured but traditional-feeling recent PSN demo, lowered hopes – but folk who have seen behind-closed-doors footage seem blown away. It could shock us all yet...

THE DARKNESS 2

DAY OF THE TENTACLE

Pub 2K Games Dev TBC ETA 2010

57

There's no doubt a sequel to this supernatural mobster romp is in development, but there is uncertainty over who is actually building it. Last year, Starbreeze were making noises about it, but have since denied involvement. We wouldn't be surprised if one of 2K's in-house studios is actually working on it, and that 2K set it back in the Big Apple. Watch this space.

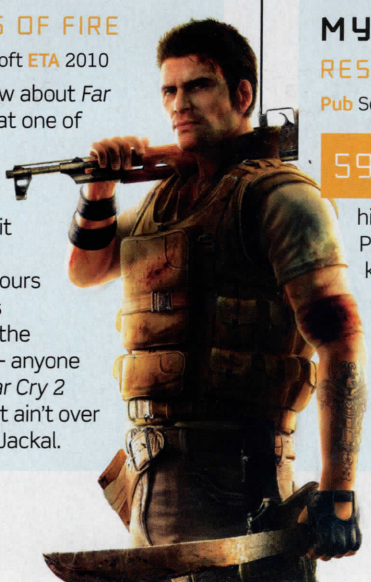
FAR CRY 3

GREAT BALLS OF FIRE

Pub Ubisoft Dev Ubisoft ETA 2010

58

All we know about *Far Cry 3* is that one of Ubisoft's script-writers has seen it in motion, and that it looks "quite impressive". Rumours suggest that this game will retain the African setting – anyone who finished *Far Cry 2* will know it ain't over with the Jackal.



NEW SHINJI MIKAMI MYSTERY PROJECT

RESI CREATOR'S NEW GAME

Pub Sega Dev Platinum Games ETA 2010

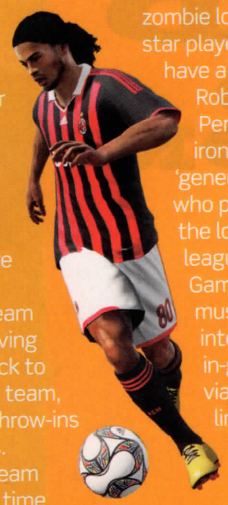
59

If you don't know, Shinji Mikami is the man behind Resident Evil and *Devil May Cry*. He's a big hitter. And now he's working with Platinum Games (who have already knocked out the genre-defining *Bayonetta*) on an unannounced project. All the signs point to it being a new franchise...

60 FIVE KEY CHANGES IN FIFA 11

1. Tweak the niggling gripes

Make keepers quicker off their line when you hold △. Make corners whippier, and headers more powerful. Make finesse shots stronger outside the box. Reduce the power of mega-shoulder barges that are clearly fouls. Don't 'reset' team formations, giving advantage back to the defending team, when taking throw-ins and free-kicks. Would *every* team member have time to get back to defend? We doubt it.



2. Sort player likenesses

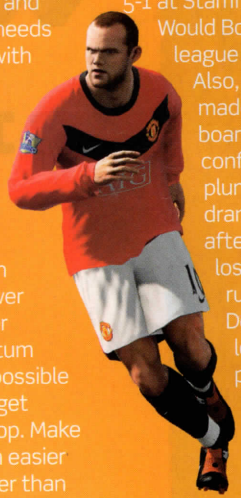
PES 2010's likenesses are unarguably superior, and *FIFA* needs to eliminate the dead-eyed zombie look of star players – have a look at Robin van Persie – plus iron out the 'genero-men' who populate the lower leagues. Game Face must be integrated in-game, not via fiddly PC link-up. What about Mac users, too, eh? Needs work.

3. Simplify the game's menus

Assigning controllers for a four-player game is a mess of 'No, it's my turn' and ○ button mishaps – *PES* handles this more clearly. Make menu skipping instant, not delayed like using a DVD menu. Don't stop the game and make us watch every time someone uses a sub. Allow us to save goal replays to the hard drive, not upload slooowly to EA servers. Let us toggle goal celebrations on/off.

4. Iron out AI madness

AI players need to react better to bouncing balls – attacking them with centre backs is still too unpredictable and risky. The AI needs to attack with more variety too, so fewer cheap crosses for certain goals. Even out the power of the 'rubber band' momentum system – it's possible for a team to get comically on top. Make beating a man easier – it's way better than before, but still too sluggish at times.



5. Attack Manager Mode

Make the league table and results more realistic – would West Ham really beat Chelsea 5-1 at Stamford Bridge? Would Bolton top the league in January? Also, it's maddening that board confidence can plummet so dramatically after one freak loss, despite a run of wins. Don't make *all* lower league players slow and poor to reflect a team's overall skill – leave the star players alone.

FIFA 11 VS PES 2011

FIVE KEY CHANGES THAT PS3'S LEADING FOOTBALL TITLES NEED TO MAKE TO STAY ON TOP OF THEIR GAME

1. Revamp the animation

Animations must *at least* rival *FIFA 10*, with more bespoke skill moves, stances (such as Ballacks's near-vertical elegance) and off-the-ball flourishes (like Gerrard revving his arms to spur on team-mates) – moves shouldn't 'snap' into life, but flow. The Edit mode should match its PS2 heyday, with sock lengths, neck warmers and so on. DLC updates could add 'fad' haircuts, like Becks' undershave.

2. Innovate in Become a Legend

Make BAL less scripted, add playable Training Mode challenges to build skills (like on PS2). Simulate games, so no watching in 4x speed. Make AI team mates smarter, so that Rooney provides better support, passing and through balls than Tony Hibbert. Add fan and manager interactions, and goal celebrations to hype crowds. Provide the ability to captain your team of choice.

3. Make Master League more realistic

Realistic transfers and wages, no Ronaldo for £12m to Sunderland. Ability to move between clubs, like a Mourinho figure, plus option to create manager likeness. Edit lower league(s), so that you could create the Championship, rather than playing in Euro D2 league. Add some atmosphere: live cup draws, silence hostile crowds, track player form in commentary. Post-match statistics.

4. Rework trick system and dribbling

If dribbling is 360° analogue, why are tricks d-pad-style double taps? Unreliable L2 + right stick system to be replaced by analogue, *FIFA*-style, movements. *FIFA*'s volume of tricks allied to *PES*'s trademark consistency, response and precision. Make dribbling 360°, not 32-way. Improve response, especially for agile defenders like Evra when turning 90°. Add power bars when taking long throw-ins.

5. Make online less predictable

Add 10 vs 10 matches. 1-4 player co-op Master League vs CPU, played at your own pace. Add an XP/rank-gearing system, so you get fewer points for winning with the popular clubs like Barcelona or Manchester United to encourage use of 'lesser' teams. Add playable training modes to explain the complexities and benefits of Tactics Sliders and Cards, or have a plain English video tutorial like *FIFA 09*. If players use analogue sticks, then put tactics on the d-pad.

61 FIVE KEY CHANGES IN PES 2011

WANTED
RED DEAD REDEMPTION

THEFT AND MURDER

John Marston has been terrorising America with acts of greed and murder. Though given the choice to engage in honest pursuits such as bounty hunting or treasure-seeking, the supposedly reformed outlaw has turned his back on gallantry.

ILLEGAL WAGERING

The irredeemable Marston has been observed in dens of inequity, swindling misguided urchins out of their ill-gotten gains. Do not be fooled by his slick appearance, for beneath that snake-like skin of oily charm lies a cold-blooded killer.

BEAR BAITING

A cruel and unusual person, Marston toys with nature's lesser creatures. With a vast stretch of beautiful, rural America at his disposal, Marston elects to spend his time picking battles with the bear – the gentle prince of the animal kingdom.

IGNOBLE DUELLING

Bystanders are urged not to venture near this insidious outlaw, as he has been known to initiate duels with honest men, tarnishing the honourable nature of the activity. Folk who bring Marston in alive will receive a handsome sum for their trouble.

A MISCELLANY OF MARSTON'S OTHER OFFENCES...

Fraternising with disreputable characters, wearing a disguise to conceal his identity, bothering armadillos, the irresponsible application of TNT, Grand Theft Equine, stirring up trouble in Mexico, leaping aboard a moving train, operating a cannon without due care and attention, and shooting people in the back.

Pub Rockstar **Dev** Rockstar **ETA** April

MORE NEW GAMES

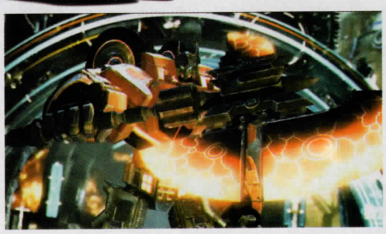
BIG BEATS, BLUFFING AND BIKES...

63 SONIC & SEGA ALL-STARS RACING
Pub Sega Dev Sumo Digital
ETA Summer
Sonic's kart racer looks like a solid outing with plenty of Sega-love. Nostalgia aside, this could end up filling a gap in PS3's party-friendly line-up.

64 WARHAMMER 40K: SPACE MARINE
Pub THQ Dev Relic Entertainment ETA 2010
Get your geek on by controlling a four-strong squad of space marines in a bloody RPG-action battle against Orc invasion.

65 FINAL FIGHT: DOUBLE IMPACT
Pub Capcom Dev Capcom ETA April
This PSN double-header is your chance to revisit both *Final Fight* and *Magic Sword*. Great, if you like a bit of retro.

66 FINAL FANTASY VERSUS XIII
Pub Square Enix Dev Square Enix ETA 2010
FFXIII's gloomy sister, *Versus XIII* looks to utilise the same engine but tell a radically different, darker tale.



67 TRANSFORMERS: WAR FOR CYBERTRON
Pub Activision Dev High Moon ETA 2010
The sequel to the sequel that no-one wanted, this latest *Transformers* is a prequel to the first film. And more are on the way...

68 FRONT MISSION: EVOLVED
Pub Square Enix Dev Double Helix Games ETA 2010
A strategic, turn-based combat game set in a futuristic, apocalypse-threatened land. Could worry *Command & Conquer*.

69 RESONANCE OF FATE
Pub Sega Dev Tri-ace
ETA Spring
This gun-combat lead, steam-punk JRPG is best of the currently announced alternatives to *FFXIII*. Keep an eye on it

70 WHITE KNIGHT CHRONICLES
Pub Sony Dev Level-5 ETA 2010
Level-5 (of *Dark Cloud* fame) turn their hands to another epic fantasy mixing old-school questing and new-fangled online co-op.

71 MOTOGP 09/10
Pub Capcom Dev Monumental Games ETA March
Annual sports releases get old, quick. That's why *MotoGP 09/10* will be offering free downloads to keep it bang up to date.

72 SPLATTERHOUSE
Pub Namco Bandai Dev Namco Bandai ETA 2010
Bloody violence, bone-breaking brutality and a general smattering of gore and retro-chic are the order of the day here.

73 CLASH OF THE TITANS
Pub Namco Bandai Dev Game Republic ETA 2010
Think action-adventure in mythical lands, an arsenal of beefy weapons and an array of big bad gods to smite. Sounds familiar...

74 RUSE
Pub Ubisoft Dev Eugen ETA 2010
RUSE twists the RTS genre by giving opportunity for deceitful tactics and military bluffing. We can't wait for this one.

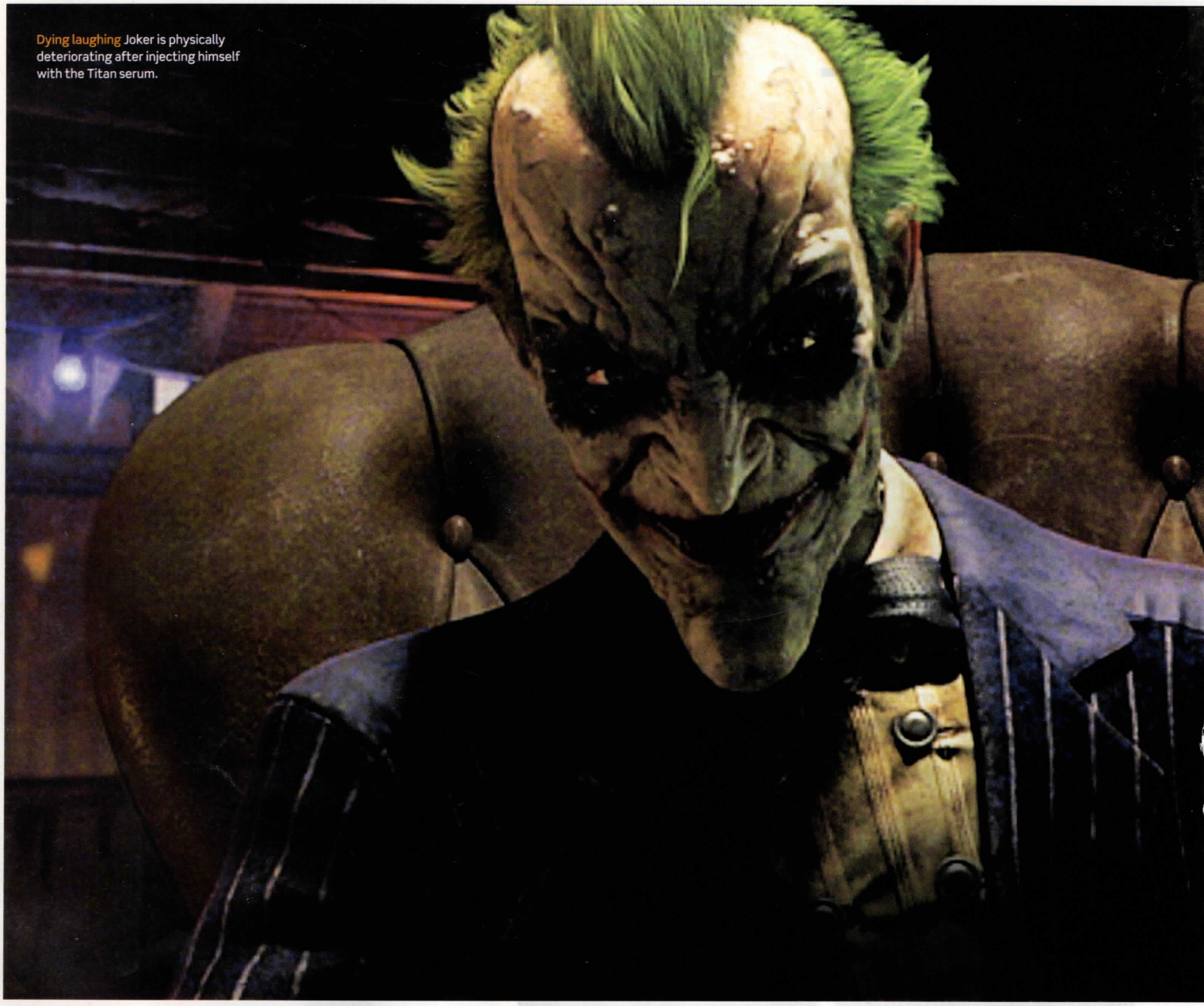
75 DJ HERO 2
Pub Activision Dev Freestyle Games ETA November
The inevitable remix is incoming, but it's no bad thing if it keeps things fresh. Expect more tunes, DJs and a *DJH* import feature.

76 MERCS INC.
Pub EA Dev EA LA ETA 2010
Mercs 2 never quite caught on, but its potential might be finally realised with this online co-op focused follow-up.

77 MEGA MAN 10
Pub Capcom Dev Capcom ETA March
Hot for some old-school, daft-boss bashing action? This tenth *MM* game will hit PSN in March for pocket-money.

78 DYNASTY WARRIORS: STRIKEFORCE
Pub KOEI Dev Omega Force
ETA February
This year's *Dynasty Warriors* is – gasp – a bit different. The entire game is played in online teams of up to four, working together to battle enemies and beat bosses in Imperial China. Better than smashing ⓞ alone.

© Warner Bros. Pictures



Dying laughing Joker is physically deteriorating after injecting himself with the Titan serum.

Pub Warner Bros. **Dev** Rocksteady **ETA** 2010

BATMAN ARKHAM ASYLUM 2

FRESH SETTING PLUS NEW VILLAINS HINTED AT

79

Arkham Island was big, but in the sequel the madness of the Asylum has spilled into a whole section of Gotham City. And The Joker is back, along with his ever-present helper Harley Quinn. In the trailer he's worse for wear, suffering the side-effects of the Titan serum he injected himself with at the end of the last game, but still seems to be in control of the new Gotham. The camera flies through the city and we see references to potential new villains, including a poster of Harvey 'Two Face' Dent and a suspicious black cat skulking across a fire escape. Catwoman, anyone? We also see The Penguin's Iceberg Lounge in the fly-by, and a business called 'Sionis' – the real name of lesser-known Batman villain Black Mask. As for new locations, a creepy theme park is shown called Wonder City. We don't think the game will be open world, despite its city setting. Rather a series of connected city blocks containing each 'level'. The game recalls Batman graphic novel 'No Man's Land' which featured crims running loose in a ruined Gotham.

PSM3 RECKONS

The inspired new setting should make for some really interesting, varied levels, and any improvements on the already spectacular *Arkham Asylum* formula can only be a good thing. This is going to kick *ass*.

"THE MADNESS HAS SPILLED OUT INTO GOTHAM CITY"

Pub Activision Dev LucasArts ETA Autumn

STAR WARS: THE FORCE UNLEASHED 2

CANON IT IS NOT, PLAY IT YOU DEFINITELY WILL

80

Scale. That's how LucasArts are looking to improve on the original's fun but flawed gameplay. In the first-glimpse trailer for *The Force Unleashed 2*, the moody anti-hero of the original faces up to a gargantuan beast – one that dwarfs the rancor Luke fought in Return of the Jedi – in an epic-size arena. Not exciting enough? Try dual light-saber wielding, one in each hand, promising more moves and more hectic fighting.

Of course, we've no idea how the game's events will tie-in to the overall Star Wars canon. From the trailer's teasing whispers, Yoda looks set to play a big part. It'll be a mammoth task to find any gaps left to fill in the series' story, but if the title succeeds where the first game failed, these little niggles won't matter to most.

Pub Konami Dev Konami ETA May

MGS PEACE WALKER

A HANDHELD EPIC

81

While *Portable Ops* tried to force the entirety of *Metal Gear*'s mental universe onto a smaller screen, and even less buttons, with thumb-wrenching effect, *Peace Walker* keeps it simple.

It drops the ponderous cut scenes and endless Codec chit-chats about Godzilla and the nature of war in favour of instant action and real-time briefings while you're in the field. There's no crawling; just a Sam Fisher crouch and an immobile prone position. And there's no first-person aiming, just a third-person zoom on L1. A single grab and throw replaces the CQC commands, with a combo system for crippling multiple enemies up close.

Wading through Japanese text to play three missions at 2009's TGS proves the controls work, better than any third person action game on PSP to date. With the thumbwork out of the way, *Peace Walker* lets you get on with the sneaking, hiding, and shooting that makes *MGS* great, and it all makes *Portable Ops* look like a beta test for the first *real* handheld evolution of the *Metal Gear* series.

PSM3 RECKONS

It's a shame that the next 'proper' Kojima-directed and penned *MGS* game is on PSP. Thankfully, from early evidence, Koj is using the format to its fullest and creating a game that plays to the handheld's strengths.

KINGDOM HEARTS: BIRTH BY SLEEP

PORTABLE PREQUEL

Pub Square Enix Dev Square Enix ETA 2010

82

This PSP exclusive title is a prequel to the original *Kingdom Hearts*, set ten whole years before the PS2 game. It features a largely unique cast of characters, and explains a lot of the series' many plot holes. It also features a new 'card battle' combat system.

RESIDENT EVIL PSP

A RETURN TO RACCOON CITY?

Pub Capcom Dev Capcom ETA 2010

83

It was a brief announcement at Sony's E3 press conference, but Jack Tretton told the world that *Resident Evil* was coming to PSP. He also confirmed that it was being made specifically for PSP, ruling out the possibility that it'll be a port or remake of some kind.

We'd love a classic *Resi* game set in Raccoon City, with the original's control scheme. It'd work well with PSP's lone analogue stick and it would put us back in touch with the series' fantastic roots. Could well be the kick up the arse PSP needs to regain its momentum.

Pub Tecmo KOEI Dev Tecmo ETA Spring

DEAD OR ALIVE PARADISE

LITTLE LADIES IN THE PALM OF YOUR HAND

84

Recognising a gaping hole in the handheld market Tecmo KOEI has announced the very first beach volleyball/island paradise sim for PSP. How thoughtful of them. Featuring the entire cast of the *Dead or Alive* fighting games, clad in little more than ill-fitting T-shirts and bikinis, *Paradise* lets you take part in relaxing pursuits such as volleyball, larking around by the pool, and casual casino games like blackjack and roulette.

There will be a photo mode too, so you can take pictures of your not-real lady friends while you're giggling and splashing them with virtual water. You can buy them gifts using in game money too, although no matter how much cash you fork out you'll never get inside their [snip]...

85 UNDEAD KNIGHTS
Pub Tecmo KOEI Dev KOEI ETA Spring
Control a horde of shambling zombies with the aim of taking over a medieval kingdom, by biting and infecting it's people. A unique take on a tired genre.

86 PERSONA
Pub TBC Dev Atlus ETA 2010
This remade version of the first Persona is already out in the US – so if you must have it, you can import. It's rewritten and visually overhauled for PSP.

87 FAT PRINCESS: FISTFUL OF CAKE
Pub Sony Dev SuperVillain Studios ETA Spring
The PSN version of *Fat Princess* was met with mixed reviews, so hopefully there is some fine-tuning going on for the eight-player PSP iteration.

88 PHANTASY STAR PORTABLE 2
Pub Sega Dev Sonic Team ETA 2010
Sega's second answer to the all-conquering *Monster Hunter* features some of the most blatant product placement ever. You can by a Pizza Hut shield FFS.

89 VALKYRIA CHRONICLES 2
Pub Sega Dev Sega ETA Summer
Why is the sequel to one of PS3's most undervalued RPGs coming out on PSP? Apparently because development times are quicker on handheld.

90 HALF-MINUTE HERO
Pub Rising Star Games Dev Marvellous ETA February
Save the world 30 seconds at a time: that's the premise behind this bonkers RPG. Essentially this translates to a series of RPG-themed mini-games.

91 SILENT HILL: SHATTERED MEMORIES
Pub Konami Dev Climax ETA February
A modern-day remake of the original *Silent Hill*, minus any weapons, *Shattered Memories* is a surprising return to form for the ailing horror series.

92 FINAL FANTASY AGITO XIII
Pub Square Enix Dev Square Enix ETA 2010
The third part of the *FFXIII* trilogy, this started life as a mobile phone game before moving to PSP. It features a battle system similar to *Crisis Core*'s.

93 SHADOW OF MEMORIES
Pub Konami Dev Konami ETA 2010
Another classic game-remake, *Shadow* puts you in the shoes of Eike, who solves his own murder through the medium of time travel. Surprisingly good.

Pub Sony Dev Quantic Dream ETA February

HEAVY RAIN

QUIZZING A WHORE AND FIGHTING A PIMP IN PS3'S FIRST 'GAME NOIR'

94

This is the first game we've ever played that feels genuinely adult. Not because it throws in swear words every two seconds, but because it deals with subjects that games rarely explore; like mental illness, fatherhood and loss. But how does it actually play, minute to minute? Below is an early scene in which bloated private eye Scott Shelby interviews a prostitute whose son was killed by the game's mysterious Origami Killer...

The interview You can go soft or hard on her, which affects her behaviour, and the info you get.

The attack Shelby leaves without any leads, and is suddenly stricken with an asthma attack.

And relax Hit QTEs to locate your inhaler and recover from the attack.

The thug You hear a scream from her apartment. Investigating reveals this thug, who immediately gets violent.

Punch up A brilliantly choreographed fight scene ensues. It's brutal.

PSM3 RECKONS

Adult, challenging and atmospheric. There's interaction, but it feels more like you're guiding a movie than playing a *game*. Striking visuals and an intriguing, mystery-laden plot should keep you interested.

Pub Konami Dev Mercury Steam ETA 2010

CASTLEVANIA: LORDS OF SHADOW

KOJIMA'S AWKWARD GOTH PHASE

95

The fact that *Metal Gear* guru Hideo Kojima is lending a helping hand is reason enough to get excited about *Lords of Shadow*. Although the atmosphere is recognisably *Castlevania*, the gameplay has been totally revamped. *Shadow of the Colossus*-style epic boss fights are a real highlight.

Monster masher It'll be interesting to see what Koj ends up doing with *Castlevania*'s epic fantasy.

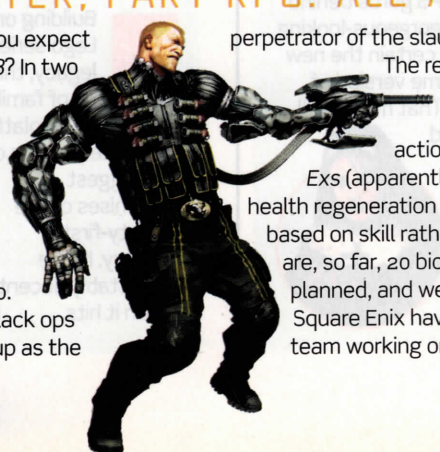
Pub Square Enix Dev Eidos Montreal ETA 2010

DEUS EX 3

PART SHOOTER, PART RPG. ALL AWESOME.

96

What should you expect from *Deus Ex 3*? In two words: Blade Runner. City streets are dark, dirty and filled with advertising neon. The game follows security guard Adam Jensen, who works security in a Biotech Lab. Early on, it's raided by black ops squad who set Jensen up as the perpetrator of the slaughter that ensues. The rest is a plot heavy on conspiracy, and a game heavier on action than previous *Deus Exs* (apparently it has a *COD*-style health regeneration system and aiming based on skill rather than stats). There are, so far, 20 bio-augmentations planned, and we know new owners Square Enix have the *Final Fantasy* CG team working on the cut-scenes. Hot.



Pub EA Dev id ETA 2010

97 FIVE REASONS TO LOVE RAGE

1. It's the same people who did *Doom* and *Quake*

Rage is the new FPS project by id, the devs who have shaped the way we play shooters. It's powered by the idTech 5 engine, which uses something called Mega Textures to make both the open world bits and interiors look incredible.

2. It's like *Fallout 3*

We love *Fallout 3*; you love *Fallout 3*. *Rage*'s post-
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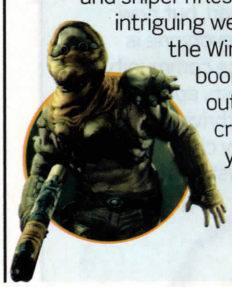
distance, and each
trip is as much about shooting enemies up with your car-cannons as it is driving or racing.

5. It's got loads of creative weapons

As well as all the usual shotguns, pistols and sniper rifles, there are some intriguing weapons in *Rage*. There's the Wingstick (a kind of lethal boomerang used for taking out enemies silently) and a crossbow bolt that lets you take control of enemies. After all, id did invent *Doom*'s BFG and *Quake*'s nailguns.



Pub Bethesda Softworks **Dev** Obsidian Entertainment **ETA** 2010

98 FALLOUT: NEW VEGAS

FIVE THINGS WE CAN EXPECT FROM THE FOLLOW-UP...

1. It'll be better than *Fallout 3*

Sure, *New Vegas* might be the same engine as *Fallout 3*, but Obsidian Entertainment's track record for taking a franchise and developing sequels superior to their forbearer is well known: just take a look at *Knights of the Old Republic II* and *Neverwinter Nights II*.

2. It'll be funnier

We love Bethesda, honestly we do, but their writers' attempt[s] can be, well, a little d[ull], especially compared [to] slick-black humour of [Black] Isle Studios' first two [Fallout] games. But with Blac[k] Isle alumni on board f[or] *New Vegas*, expect a [far] darker, funnier trip across the wasteland[s].

3. We'll have more choices

If you happened to g[et] the psychopath rout[e] *Fallout 3*, you may h[ave] a little bemused by [the] otherwise saintly fa[ce]

nonchalant reaction to news of your reprehensible escapades. Yup, *Fallout 3* didn't really manage Karma that well in a narrative sense – but you can bet *New Vegas* will address any issues.

4. It'll be seedier

The *Fallout* world's retro-futurist interpretation [will] be light on the [1]s of the latter half [of the] century, and heavy [on] gangsters and [what] made *50s* Vegas [an] exciting and [dan]erous place to be.

There will be ghoul strippers

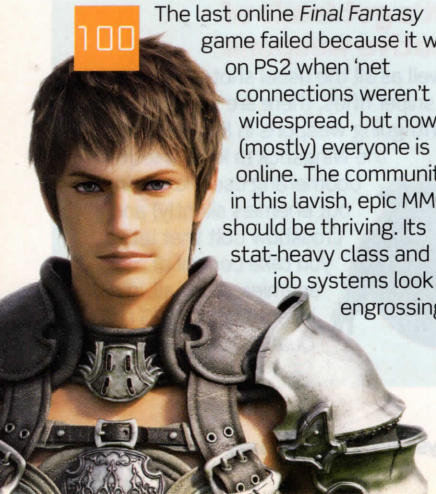
[Yeah] – it's Vegas! Expect [the] slave race to be [pole]ng the poles. In all [se]usness, though, we do [expe]ct ghouls to return. [Per]haps you'll be able to [k]eep one as a servant too.

FINAL FANTASY XIV

THE KING OF PS3 MMOS

Pub Square Enix **Dev** Square Enix **ETA** 2010

100 The last online *Final Fantasy* game failed because it was on PS2 when 'net connections weren't widespread, but now (mostly) everyone is online. The community in this lavish, epic MMO should be thriving. Its stat-heavy class and job systems look engrossing.



TIMESPLITTERS 4

'SPLITTERS IN CRYSIS?

Pub TBC **Dev** Free Radical **ETA** 2010

101 Free Radical is now property of Crytek – the FPS gurus behind the incredibly gorgeous-looking *Crysis* – so it's virtually certain the new '*Splitters* will run on some version of the latest Cry-Engine. That means it'll be incredibly pretty and very slick in multi-player. Here's hoping that they don't lose the series' trademark charm in the process, though.

LEGO HARRY POTTER: YEARS 1-4

MAGIC PLASTIC FANTASTIC

Pub Warner Bros. **Dev** TT Games **ETA** 2010

102 Building on the Lego series' legacy, the next instalment of family-friendly co-op platform fare takes on one of the biggest franchises of the twenty-first century. It'll be predictably decent when it hits.

Hail to the king We can't wait to explore a nuke-ravaged Vegas.

PSM3 RECKONS

The heritage of the developers should ensure this is faithful to the original games. The setting is ripe for amazingly weird and wonderful post-apocalyptic scenes too. Has the potential to be the RPG of 2010.

Pub EA Dev Criterion ETA 2010

NEED FOR SPEED

ANOTHER REBOOT FOR THE FRANCHISE?

99 If you can't beat 'em, hire 'em. That's EA's logic, as the kings of arcade racing move to another tune-up of the *NFS* franchise. What with *Shift* taking things in a dry sim direction, we reckon this could see a return to *Hot Pursuit* roots. Think insane speed, intense cop chases and traffic-swerving highway hi-jinks. Criterion could well utilise their open world expertise, mixing classic *NFS* gameplay and *Burnout Paradise*-style exploration.

THIEF 4

STEALING THE SHOW

Pub Square Enix Dev Eidos ETA 2010

103 The second project underway at Eidos Montreal is *Thief 4*, which was confirmed back in May 2009. The *Thief* series follows the exploits of master swag-stealer Garrett, so expect him to return. The series' trademark blend of tense sneaking and atmospheric medieval settings make it one of the best stealth games around. We hope it's good on PS3.

L.A. NOIRE

FILM NOIR THRILLER

Pub Rockstar Dev Team Bondi ETA 2010

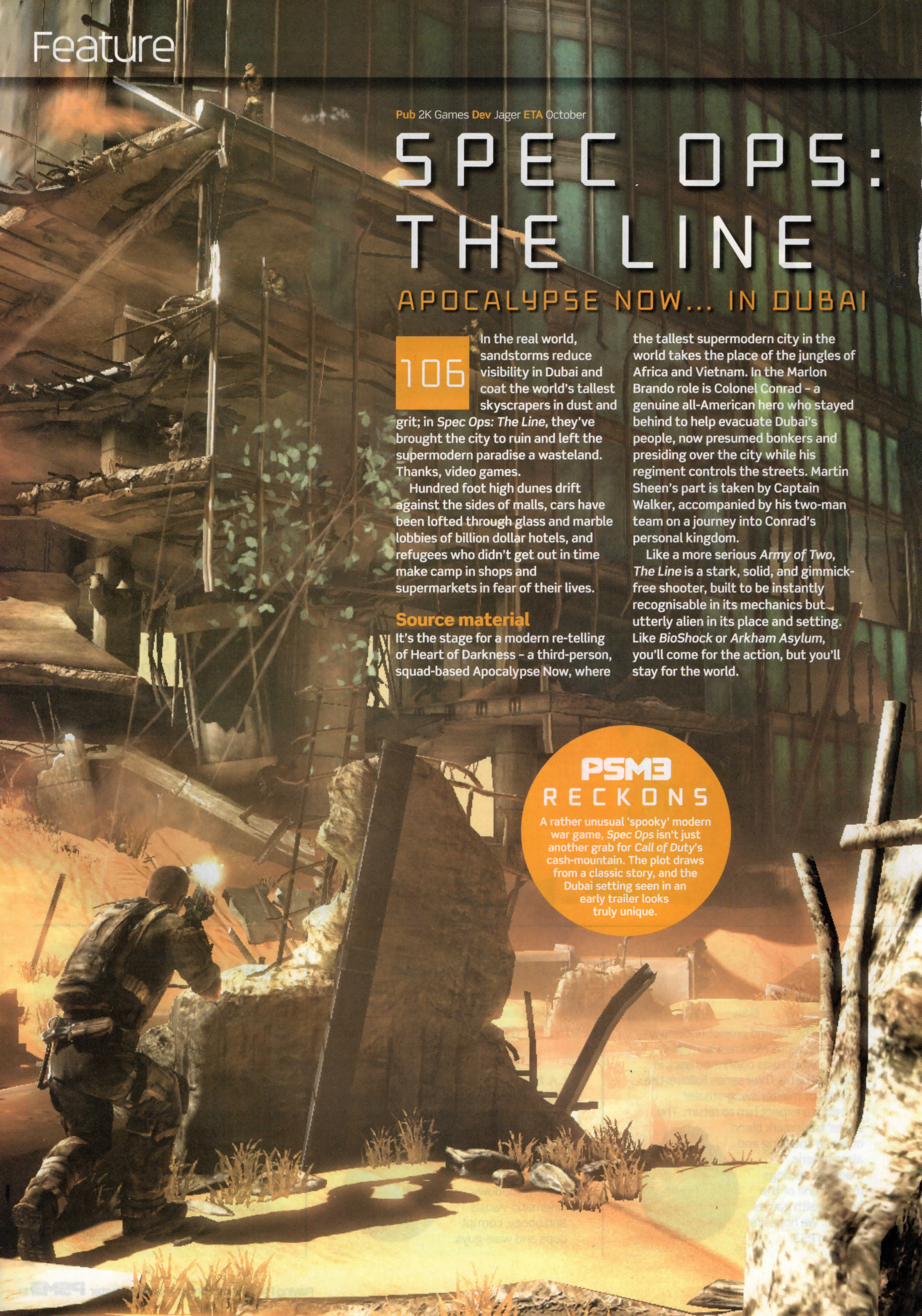
104 *GTA* meets The Godfather is an unfairly mighty expectation to lumber any game with, but if *L.A. Noire*'s moody rendition of a 1940s Los Angeles gangland even half lives up to the pressure of such lofty comparisons, it could be the equal of its bigger brother. Expect moody, shadowy cinematic visuals and boozy, corrupt cops and wise-guys.

JAMES BOND 007

CRAIG RETURNS

Pub Activision Dev TBC ETA 2010

105 Activision have held the Bond license for three years now, and have only managed to release the mediocre *Quantum of Solace*. This year, expect to see a new Bond that draws its inspiration from the extensive back-catalogue of films. Rumours suggest that racing specialists, Bizarre Creations are working on it.



Pub 2K Games Dev Jager ETA October

SPEC OPS: THE LINE

APOCALYPSE NOW... IN DUBAI

106

In the real world, sandstorms reduce visibility in Dubai and coat the world's tallest skyscrapers in dust and grit; in *Spec Ops: The Line*, they've brought the city to ruin and left the supermodern paradise a wasteland. Thanks, video games.

Hundred foot high dunes drift against the sides of malls, cars have been lofted through glass and marble lobbies of billion dollar hotels, and refugees who didn't get out in time make camp in shops and supermarkets in fear of their lives.

Source material

It's the stage for a modern re-telling of Heart of Darkness – a third-person, squad-based Apocalypse Now, where the tallest supermodern city in the world takes the place of the jungles of Africa and Vietnam. In the Marlon Brando role is Colonel Conrad – a genuine all-American hero who stayed behind to help evacuate Dubai's people, now presumed bonkers and presiding over the city while his regiment controls the streets. Martin Sheen's part is taken by Captain Walker, accompanied by his two-man team on a journey into Conrad's personal kingdom.

Like a more serious *Army of Two*, *The Line* is a stark, solid, and gimmick-free shooter, built to be instantly recognisable in its mechanics but utterly alien in its place and setting. Like *BioShock* or *Arkham Asylum*, you'll come for the action, but you'll stay for the world.

PSM3 RECKONS

A rather unusual 'spooky' modern war game, *Spec Ops* isn't just another grab for *Call of Duty*'s cash-mountain. The plot draws from a classic story, and the Dubai setting seen in an early trailer looks truly unique.

ENSLAVED

MONKEY SEE, MONKEY DO

Pub Namco **Dev** Ninja Theory **ETA** Winter

107 A new take on co-op. You play as Monkey, a Tribal loner who has been 'enslaved' by another human called Trip. Fail to obey her, and you get a savage shock administered via a magic headband. Let her die, and you die too. Intriguing. It's by *Heavenly Sword* dev Ninja Theory, and is set to be a solid action game.

TRUE CRIME

GOOD COP, BAD COP ETC.

Pub Activision **Dev** United Front **ETA** 2010

108 Blurring the line between good cop and rogue enforcer is easy. Taking a dead franchise and making it modern-day standard is much harder. *True Crime* is having a go at both. From brutal face-kicking brawls to leaping from motorbikes whilst shooting all manner of scum, this reminds us of *Wheelman*. Ho hum.

TRON EVOLUTION

BACK TO THE FUTURE...

Pub Disney **Dev** Propaganda **ETA** Autumn

109 Based on the recent trailer, this film tie in combines light-biking and cyber combat in a highly stylised virtual world. A game based on a film about games is the perfect inspiration for some momentous movie-aping moments. As long as the art-style remains intact, this will have a welcome retro flavour.

Pub Konami Dev Kojima Productions ETA 2010

MGS: RISING

EXCLUSIVITY? PAH! RISING IS STILL SET TO RULE PS3

110 Yes, it's early days for confirmed details about the new *MGS* but given Robo-Raiden's high-kicking, sword-swinging hijinks in *MGS4*, coupled with the fact that the series tagline 'Tactical Espionage Action' has been replaced with 'Lightning Bolt Action', we're thinking *Metal Gear Solid: Rising* might have a touch of *Devil May Cry* about it. After all, Kojima is stepping back from the directorial role in favour of concentrating on PSP's *MGS: Peace Walker*, and has stated that *Rising* holds "a completely different kind of action to what's appeared before."

We can make assumptions about the chronology of the game too, given that Raiden is still in his cyborg state. We presume that the game takes place between the events of *MGS2* and *MGS4*, potentially explaining some off-screen events that occurred in the latter game...

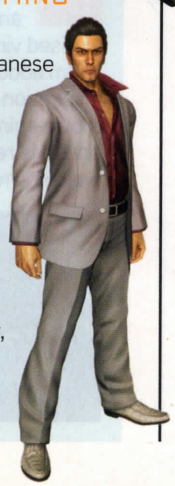
PSM3 RECKONS

The gaping plot gap in the middle of *Metal Gear Solid 4* is an obvious choice for a spin-off game, and *Rising* sounds like an interesting departure from *MGS*' stealth roots. We can't wait to get to grips with cyborg Raiden.

YAKUZA 3

JAPANESE GTA INCOMING

Pub Sega Dev Sega ETA March



111 We reviewed the Japanese version of this back in issue 113, and awarded it an admirable 83%. Sega has finally confirmed that the game will hit in March with English subtitles to avoid detracting from the (as far as we can tell) rather good Japanese voice acting. Finally, we can find out why those hostesses wouldn't put out in the dating mini-game...

THE BOURNE ASCENDANCY

DAMON-WARE

Pub EA Dev Starbreeze ETA 2010

112 Who better to create the next Bourne game than the masters of FPS fisticuffs, Starbreeze. They were the devs behind *The Chronicles of Riddick* and *The Darkness*, and now they're working on EA's first Bourne game since the license passed over. It will be brutal.

RED FACTION GUERRILLA 2

GOING DEEPER

Pub THQ Dev Volition ETA 2010

113 Although this game hasn't had a formal announcement, we know much of the action will take place in vast Martian cities, and Alec Mason will make a return. Hopefully the subterranean setting will mean more variety...

© Universal Pictures

Pub 2K Games Dev 2K Czech ETA Spring

MAFIA II

GANGSTER'S PARADISE

114 *Mafia II* has the potential to rival and even surpass the brilliance of *GTA IV*. Here's why... The whole game is incredibly atmospheric. Everything from the fantastically animated, well-rounded cast, to the scenarios, right down to the tiny details in every part of Empire Bay (the game's New York-style city setting) feels authentic and alive. You can even see the logos on kitchen appliances in the indoor sections. Story-wise, it's shaping up to be a real show-stopper too – there's none of that cheesy 'wise-guy' dialogue that has plagued so many other mafia-style video games. It's confident, cool and unflinchingly violent. We can't wait.

Big city Empire Bay is an accomplished setting to rival Liberty City.

QUANTUM THEORY

PS3'S GEARS OF WAR

Pub Tecmo KOEI Dev Tecmo ETA Spring

115 Bad news – this previously exclusive *Gears of War*-a-like is now multi-format. *QT* features heavily armoured space marines fighting aliens, although it adds intrigue by being set inside a living tower that constantly changes as you fight through it. There's a girl in it too, making it less of a sausage-fest than the incredibly manly *Gears of War* series.

HITMAN 5

SNEAKING UP ON US

Pub Square Enix Dev IO ETA Late 2010

116 According to US movie site Variety, the next Hitman film will share strong plot themes with *Hitman 5*, which they claim is due out in late 2010. We reckon this is true. Expect a more 'Hollywood' *Hitman* by the end of the year, once IO have coughed up the intriguing *Kane and Lynch 2* of course...

2010'S HOTTEST RUMOURS

Careless comments from the voice actor who played Cole in **inFamous** (117) reveal the inevitable sequel to the not-quite-as-good-as-it-should-have-been superhero game is under way. Expect an announcement, but not a release in 2010. Ditto for **Mirror's Edge 2** (118) and **Race Driver GRID 2** (119), which are dead certs for late 2010 / early 2011.

It isn't just about sequels either. There are several classic-franchise remakes planned for 2010 including **Syndicate Wars** (120), a new **SSX** (121), and an update of Mega Drive classic **Road Rash** (122). We'd be surprised to see any of them before 2011. Speaking of blasts from the past, rumour also suggests that a third game in the popular-on-PC **System Shock** (123) series is in the works. Treat this with a dose of Roger Moore eyebrow, as *BioShock* is in many ways the spiritual successor to the *System Shock* games. Fresh IP, it seems, is thin on the ground. However, new title **The Ripper** (124) is in development at the *Dead Space* / *Dante's* Inferno studio Visceral Games.

It seems the PS3 grapevine is groaning with rumour of hybrid RPGs. Bethesda is said to be working on what has been described as **Gears of Warcraft** (125) as well as the next instalment in the **Elder Scrolls** (126) series. Bethesda Softworks are free to work on this, having farmed out the next *Fallout* game to RPG veterans Obsidian. We also hear from Japan that **Persona 5** (127) is bubbling away nicely, and that it will be the series' first instalment on PS3.

Finally, what would a rumour column be without some obligatory Hideo Kojima speculation. Not content with having his delicate fingers in *MGS Peace Walker*, *MGS Rising* and *Castlevania*, we hear **Koj** is also working on a more personal project (128). Could be the zombie MMO he mused about in 2007, or even the *Zone of the Enders* update that he keeps mentioning.

Pub Square Enix Dev Crystal Dynamics ETA 2010

129 HOW TOMB RAIDER WILL BE REMADE FOR 2010

LARA'S PLAN TO COMPETE WITH UNCHARTED AND ASSASSIN'S...

NEW LOOK

Lara has changed over the years, but somehow – in *Underworld* – she still managed to look like a game heroine from the 90s. Supposed leaked images suggest a radical facial redesign has been suggested for the next title in the series.

CHANGE OF CLOTHES

The modern trend of video game ladies (with the exception of *Bayonetta* and *Ninja Gaiden*) has been to tone down the overtly sexy. Expect Lara's new togs to be more conservative, with just a hint of the smouldering. Think Chloe or Elena from *Uncharted 2*.

PARKOUR IS IN

Lara may have defined platforming in 3D, but games like *Mirror's Edge* and *Assassin's Creed* have taken it to the next level. Expect new Lara to have some serious free-running skills.

NEW SETTING, NEW CHALLENGES

Along with the leaked character image were shots of some kind of unearthly being riding a horse. It suggests to us that the next *Raider* will have more of a supernatural bent, much like the latter stages of *Uncharted 2*, only with a little extra fear factor. Will dual pistols be enough to keep Lara safe?

NEEDS MULTI-PLAYER

A recent job ad posted by the latest *TR* developer, Crystal Dynamics, calls for someone to "effectively create and lead the multi-player vision and design effort" on an unannounced AAA title. It's going to be *Tomb Raider*, and we reckon *Uncharted 2* will supply the inspiration for online play.

MORE NEW GAMES

COWBOYS, CAGE-FIGHTERS AND CARS...

130 IRON MAN 2
Pub Sega Dev Sega ETA 2010
Yes, the first game wasn't so great. Regardless, here's hoping that the sequel will be able to build on the promising potential of the movie's action set-pieces.

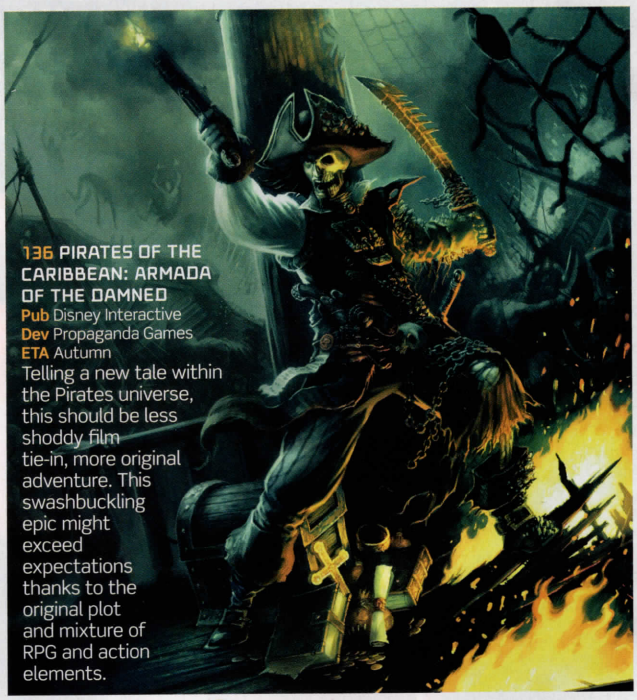
131 SPLIT/SECOND
Pub Disney Dev Black Rock Studio ETA May
A blockbuster racer where drivers can smash the tracks, creating new routes and destroying fellow racers' dreams. Yes.

132 WARRIORS: LEGENDS OF TROY
Pub KOEI Dev KOEI Canada ETA 2010
LOT's twist is that it tells the tale from two sides – the Trojans or the Greeks. Either way, you'll be slicing up hordes of enemies.

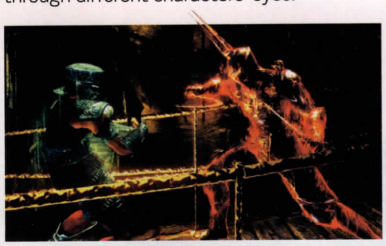
133 MMA
Pub EA Dev EA Tiburon ETA 2010
This promises an authentic array of martial arts from around the world, complete with real-life fighters and punchy graphics.

134 YAKUZA 4
Pub Sega Dev Sega ETA 2010
Sega's fourth Eastern take on the sandbox gangster game promises four storylines told through different characters' eyes.

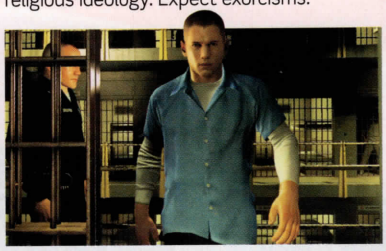
135 HELLION: MYSTERY OF THE INQUISITION
Pub TBA Dev Flying Fish Works ETA 2010
A thirteenth-century shooter (?) drenched in religious ideology. Expect exorcisms.



136 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: ARMADA OF THE DAMNED
Pub Disney Interactive
Dev Propaganda Games
ETA Autumn
Telling a new tale within the Pirates universe, this should be less shoddy film tie-in, more original adventure. This swashbuckling epic might exceed expectations thanks to the original plot and mixture of RPG and action elements.



137 DEMON'S SOULS
Pub TBC Dev From Software ETA 2010
Atmospheric, thoroughly inventive and brutally satisfying, we can't wait for this to finally hit European PS3s...



138 PRISON BREAK
Pub Deep Silver Dev Zootfly ETA Autumn
Based on the first series, you'll play an undercover agent sent inside to unearth why Michael Scofield was imprisoned.

139 BATTLEFIELD: BAD COMPANY 2
Pub EA Dev DICE ETA March
EA's modern war FPS effort offers 46 weapons, fifteen real vehicles and a slew of customisation options for multi-player.

140 STEAMBOT CHRONICLES 2
Pub TBA Dev Irem Software ETA 2010
Combining sandbox action and laid-back Japanese life simulation, this is strange but does have robo-mech scrapping.

141 THE OUTSIDER
Pub TBA Dev Frontier ETA 2010
Frontier are looking to break boundaries in their quest for freedom of choice by offering players a completely dynamic story.

145 TRINITY SOULS OF ZILL O'LL
Pub KOEI Dev Omega Force
ETA 2010
Trinity tasks you with managing a trio of heroes in a dark, fantasy land. Swapping between assassin, warrior and wizard adds a tactical element to an otherwise fairly typical action RPG.

142 SCRATCH: THE ULTIMATE DJ
Pub Genius Dev Commotion ETA 2010
Genius are hoping the hip-hop remix options will set this apart from its competition (*DJ Hero*), but we worry it isn't up to scratch.

143 GREED CORP.
Pub TBC Dev WIGames ETA 2010
Part PSN RTS title, part environmental warning, this inventive strategy title should prove as addictive as it is guilt-inducing.

144 LEAD AND GOLD: GANGS OF THE WILD WEST
Pub Paradox Interactive Dev Fatshark ETA Summer
With an emphasis on co-op, this could be an alternative to *Red Dead Redemption*. Maybe.

Pub Sony **Dev** Polyphony Digital **ETA** Summer

GRAN TURISMO 5

ON THE WHITE LINE BETWEEN GAMING AND REALITY

146

The full game should be released this decade but, for now, aspiring race drivers can join this year's GT Academy. PS3 owners will get the chance to sample a brand new car and track lifted from the forthcoming *GT5*. Available online for free through January, gamers can compete for the fastest flying laps in a race-tuned Nissan 370Z. The quickest will join the academy proper at Silverstone this March. There, they'll be put through an "intensive race training program", turning *GT5* skills into test-track talent and a shot at an international racing license. The grand prize, for the top talent from each country, is a full season in a real-life racing Nissan, joining genuine drivers in the GT4 Cup's RJN Motorsport team. Last year's GT Academy winner was a real sofa to speedway success story, taking two race victories and helping the outfit to claim the 2009 Team's Championship. For ever-patient *GT* fans, the chance to take a spin round a new track should be reason enough to get involved. The proper game, meanwhile, is rumoured to be hitting the UK this June in a souped-up three disc set. The mysterious extra discs are most likely a GT TV disc and making-of features to reward us for our eternal patience, but who knows what *Gran Turismo* grand-daddy Kazunori Yamauchi could have up his sleeves. Hopefully, there's a full game up there somewhere...

PSM3 RECKONS

GT5 will undoubtedly be the best-looking racer on PS3, but can it innovate next to new racing gods like GRID and Forza? The lack of any substantial car-damage and the robotic opponent AI suggest otherwise.

Pub SCE Dev Team Ico ETA 2010

THE LAST GUARDIAN

TEAM ICO'S LATEST MASTERPIECE-TO-BE POSES MANY QUESTIONS. WE ANSWER SOME.

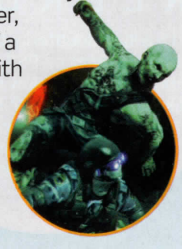
Best friends forever *The Last Guardian* will melt even the most cynical of gamer's hearts.

SINGULARITY

ATMOSPHERIC SHOOTER

Pub Activision Dev Raven ETA March

149 In terms of atmosphere, this has a real whiff of *BioShock*. The subdued lighting, the faded-glory of the setting, and the creepy monsters that track you – it's all a bit Rapture. However, *Singularity* is more of a traditional shooter with some innovative time-travelling mechanics included. We're feeling optimistic about this one.



GREEN DAY: ROCK BAND

TIME OF YOUR LIFE?

Pub EA Dev Harmonix ETA 2010

150 The pop-punk rockers get the *Rock Band* treatment – hopefully more *Beatles* than *AC/DC*. We can expect a ton of the trio's classics, from early hits like Dookie's Basket Case to 21st Century Breakdown's Know Your Enemy. Not a fan of disc-swapping? There's a full export into *RB2*, too.

HALF-LIFE EPISODE 3

FINAL FREEDMAN

Pub EA Dev EA ETA 2010

151 Set in the Arctic, the final part of the *Half-Life 2* story sees Freeman and the Combine battling over the mysterious contents of a ship, the Borealis. PS3 version won't be Valve developed.

147

Wait, this looks a bit familiar.

Indeed. Remember *Ico*? This PS3 exclusive is the third game by its developer; the gents also responsible for *Shadow of the Colossus*. In fact, *The Last Guardian*'s key relationship is very much inspired by the relationship between *Shadow*'s protagonist, Wanda, and his horse.

Whoa, what's with the weird giant dog eagle?

That's Trico, known as a 'sea eagle' in the Japanese title. Rescued by the toga-wearing boy protagonist, the two soon form a bond. The player will have to care for Trico during the course of the game, by removing enemy spears, for example. In return, Trico will help the boy murder enemies and solve the glorious environmental puzzles that are Team Ico's trademark. Well, with a bit of coaxing.

Coaxing?

Yup, Trico represents the pinnacle of Team Ico's work on AI, physics and transformative animation. Having no direct control over your giant sea eagle pal, you'll have to manage him through a marriage of the three – for example, tossing a barrel over a chasm, and grabbing onto Trico's feathers as he leaps over to investigate. Similar to *Shadow of the Colossus*, you'll find yourself shimmying up and down Trico's body, clinging on for dear life, as together you traverse the perilous landscapes of *The Last Guardian*.

PSM3 RECKONS

We've been dying to revisit Fumito Ueda's gorgeous *Ico* universe since we defeated the final Colossus on PS2. Expect a similar kind of immersive environment, subtle storytelling and gameplay innovations.

Pub THQ Dev Kaos Studios ETA Winter

HOMEFRONT

THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOMEFRONT

148

Homefront is a big, big deal for THQ. The publisher has huge ambitions for 2010 and this is its *Modern Warfare*. There's been nothing new on the game since the breathtaking behind-closed-doors demo at E3 in 2009, but we're still pumped from seeing that.

The setting is a nightmarish not-too-distant future, where North Korea has invaded the US. As part of the American resistance it's down to you to liberate the Land of the Free. The game's set-piece generating Drama Engine is sure to excite.

STARHAWK

WARHAWK IN SPACE

Pub Sony Dev Incognito ETA 2010

152

One of the least secret unannounced games on PS3, *Starhawk* is the next from Incognito, who brought us the superb PSN shooter *Warhawk*. This will be the game the (possibly) cancelled *Star Wars Battlefront* PS3 should have been, with space battles raging above epic scraps on the surface of alien planets. Sounds suitably epic.

NO MORE HEROES

MODERN JAPANSE CLASSIC

Pub TBC Dev Grasshopper ETA 2010

153

Originally on Wii, *No More Heroes* will reach its full potential on PlayStation 3. Its darkly violent story follows anime-nut Travis Touchdown as he proves his deadly skills by offing ten of the world's most dangerous assassins. Features plenty of pop-culture references, ladies in bikinis and an absurd sense of humour that typifies the *Killer 7* developers.

DUST 514

EVE ONLINE AS AN FPS

Pub TBC Dev CCP Games ETA 2010

154

A massively multi-player online shooter, *Dust 514* is tied to PC MMO *EVE Online*. This means PC nerds playing the space-sim will direct their forces from space as console gamers fight out the battles in first-person. If CCP get the basics right, this could be a deep and innovative console/PC crossover.

THE YEAR AHEAD ACCORDING TO PSM3

THE TEAM MUSE ON THEIR FAVOURITE UPCOMING GAMES...

2010 IN SHOOTERS WITH ANDY K

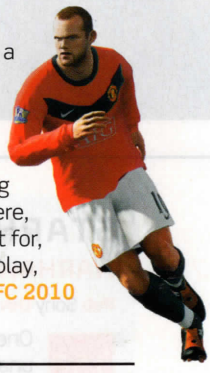
2009 was a quiet year for shooters (*Modern Warfare 2* scared them off), but 2010 is packed with quality FPS games. My pick of the year is **Brink** – the way it blends multi-player with single player is revolutionary. Another real contender is **Medal of Honor** – recent footage shows it looking very similar to *MW2*, which is no bad thing. Also new is **Spec Ops**, a hot shooter set in the desert – very similar to id's latest, **Rage**. Both are real prospects. Finally, let's not forget **Deus Ex 3**. We've been waiting ages, so let's hope Square / Eidos can deliver.

2010 IN ONLINE WITH OWEN

I might be in the minority but I'm looking forward to seeing how **MAG** pans out next year. Yes, it's not as instantly wowing as *Modern Warfare 2*, but the extra level of depth and the superb community features might be enough to drag in a fresh audience. It's a similar story with **Battlefield Bad Company 2**'s massive scale and vehicular action. Then there's **RUSE** – an RTS that's been designed with console audiences in mind – it's destined to be an online success considering the wealth of tactics you'll get to use against your fellow warmonger. But the most exciting thing about 2010? It's the year that the first few 'real' PS3 MMOs hit. They'll probably end up a bit rough around the edges but **DC Universe** and **Final Fantasy XIV** are incoming. After those we'll have persistent universes popping up all over the place.

2010 IN SPORTS WITH DAN

With **PES**'s pride well and truly trampled by *FIFA 10* it's going to be a cracking year for footie fans. Konami will undoubtedly try extra hard to win back fans, while EA will look to extend their lead. The winner? Us – we'll get two cracking football games in 2010. Elsewhere, **Skate 3** will be one to watch out for, especially if you're into online play, as will the battle between **UFC 2010** and EA's new **MMA** game.



PSM3 PREDICTS THE FUTURE

THREE PLAYSTATION EVENTS THAT MAY HAPPEN IN 2010

1 PSPGO WILL BE DISCONTINUED
This stupidly-priced iteration of the PSP was more for serious tech-heads than Joe Consumer. As such, expect the device to be given the boot or redesigned.

2 ITUNES WILL COME TO PS3
It's about time PS3 had its own unique service to rival Xbox's Last.fm. An iTunes-style interface to organise and search our music would be a great addition to the XMB.

3 PS3 PREMIUM ONLINE SERVICE
This has been hinted at by Sony, and it seems increasingly likely to happen. Some object, but we'd pay for faster downloads and exclusive video content if it was available. As long as the pricing is sensible.

THE GAMES WE WANT ON PS3

1 MASS EFFECT 2
Why? Because it's one of the best sci-fi games ever made, and considering the series is now owned by EA, it's a genuine possibility.

2 ALAN WAKE
Why? Because this is the current generation's *Silent Hill*. Creepy as hell, well scripted, and incredibly atmospheric. Oh and 360 exclusive.

3 SPLINTER CELL CONVICTION
Why? Because Sam Fisher has gone all Jason Bourne, and now kicks ass at 100mph instead of endlessly lurking in shadows. Sort it Ubisoft.

4 LEFT 4 DEAD 2
Why? Because PS3-owners like killing zombies with their friends too... There's no reason *L4D2* wouldn't work on PS3 – Valve are just too lazy to port it.

5 GTA EPISODES FROM LIBERTY CITY
Why? Because we're desperate for more *GTA* love. The two Episodes are games in themselves and show very different sides to Liberty City.

2010 IN ACTION GAMES WITH RICH

Last summer was dominated by the Dark Knight, and I'm looking forward to stepping back into the black suit for **Batman 2**. There are so many villains left unpunched, and hopefully the whole of Gotham City to explore. I also hope Rocksteady introduce Two Face. On the opposite side of the spectrum is **Heavy Rain**, which may pack less hay-makers but seems to nail the most important element of an adventure game: the story. 2010's looking good for story-driven games – **Mafia II** may tell a familiar tale, but it does so with sophistication, while **The Last Guardian** will surely end up pulling heartstrings.

2010 IN RPGS WITH ANDY H

While everyone else is revelling in the fact **Final Fantasy XIII** will arrive in March, the game that's got me most excited is **Fallout: New Vegas**. Why? I just can't wait to get back into the *Fallout* world; to spend hours exploring New Vegas searching out trinkets and quests. It's going to be huge. And, despite its delay, I'm still hot for **Alpha Protocol**, which is also in development over at Obsidian. Oh, and my dark-horse? **Resonance of Fate**. Beautiful setting with some explosive combat: a real treat.

2010 IN RACERS WITH MILF

The first year of the new decade will be known as the one when **Gran Turismo 5** finally came out. The visuals in the recent demo look weak, but it's sure to be as deep as ever under the hood. After the brilliant *GRID* and *DiRT 2*, I'm hopeful for the new **Need for Speed**, because Criterion (of *Burnout* fame) are now at the helm. *Shift* was a step in the right direction, but I'm hungry for some crashes. It's a good year for arcade racing too: **Blur**, and the ridiculously explosive **Split/Second** both look great.

2010 IN STINKERS WITH THE OPTIMIST

I love bad games. They exist to make the really good games look even better. So, I'm particularly looking forward to **True Crime**. Bland, generic and cheesy, it's got six out of ten written all over it. Another sequel no-one asked for is **Kane and Lynch 2**. Sure it could be an improvement, but I'm not holding my breath. **Iron Man 2**? Sure to be turgid. **Prison Break**? Looks a bit last-gen. My hot tip for underachiever of the year? **Resistance 3**. The second one felt a bit superfluous, so this is beyond unnecessary. It's going to be a great year for fans of sub-standard game code...

Your words, your pictures, your videos...

Your Space

LETTER

Star letter wins you a prize!

Write the star letter and win a game of choice from our fun drawer of promos. You get your name and views printed on this page too.

PSM3 wants YOU!

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- **PlayStation Network** Add us: PSM3uk
- **Facebook** Search for 'PSM3' in the Groups application
- **MySpace** Visit www.myspace.com/psm3
- **PSM3mag.com** Visit the forum at psm3mag.com
- **Online** Play the team at online games and win big
- **Twitter** Follow us at twitter.com/psm3_magazine

Letters To PSM3

Your letters and emails, sifted and printed

Hope and glory Some of the world's best games are British.

"Isn't it time the UK government supported the games industry?"

LETTER

I've been into gaming for about twenty years, and I've seen the games industry grow from a bedroom hobby into a multi-million dollar medium. A lot has changed over the years (good and bad), but I find it particularly sad that the British games development scene seems to be in such dire straits. It was bedroom developers here who made many of the most creative early games, but they're being increasingly sidelined by American and Japanese games developers – and ignored by the UK government, who have refused to give any tax breaks to struggling UK companies. Pretty soon the British games industry is going to head the way of our film industry, and resort to making terrible comedies like Sex Lives of the Potato Men, or boring period dramas for the sake of the American film market. Or the game versions of those, anyway – mini-game compilations, or film tie-ins, perhaps?

Isn't it about time the government supported the UK games industry? Canada introduced tax breaks for Canadian-based developers a while ago, which is why so many game developers are now based there. It's also why loads of TV programmes are being filmed in the land of Mounties and maple syrup – because they can't afford to make them elsewhere. If we want to keep companies like Rare and Media Molecule based in Britain, our government needs to steal Canada's idea and offer incentives for developers to remain here. Otherwise the UK is going to have nothing to offer the games industry, except cheaply made, terrible movie tie-ins.

For a country that has brought the world *GoldenEye*, *Grand Theft Auto* and *LittleBigPlanet*, what a sad state of affairs that would be.

Rob Peel, email

Despite some valiant efforts by folk like Charlie Brooker, and big events like the Golden Joysticks, gaming has still yet to be 'accepted' in the UK as a viable entertainment medium. Until its reputation increases – beyond annoying MPs like Keith Vaz – things are unlikely to change any time soon.

"You What?"

Thanks for writing. No. Really

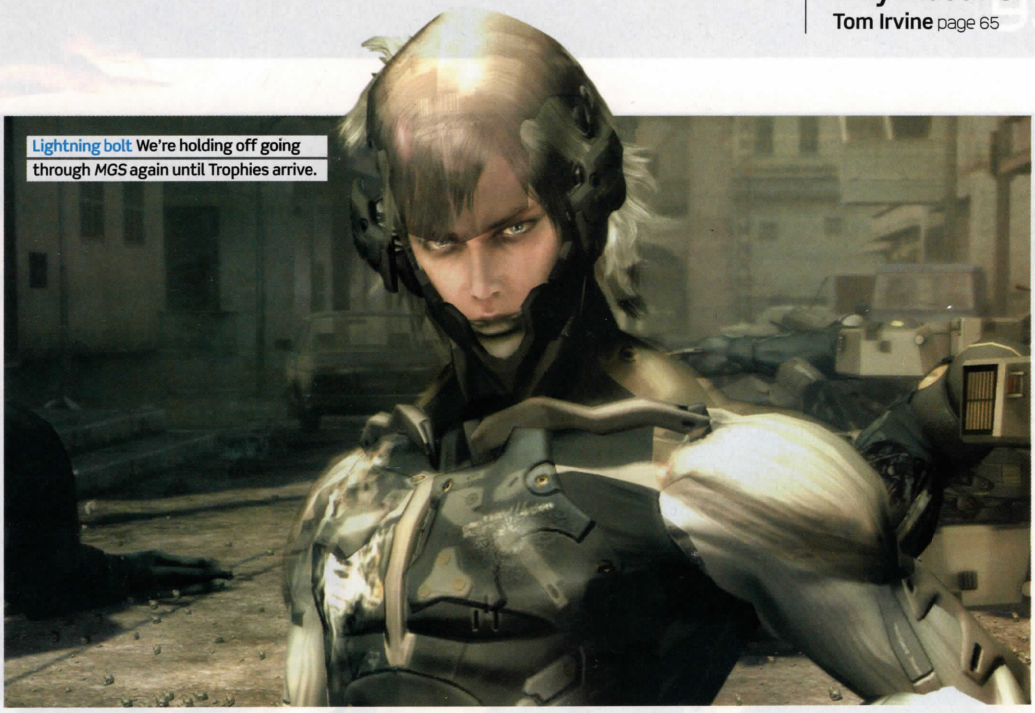
Hey, anyone know if *MGS4* Trophies will ever exist?
Robert Stevens, Facebook

Koj discussed this a few months ago. Nothing is confirmed yet though. (bit.ly/4BUhh0)

Does anyone know where you can get your broken PS3 controllers fixed?
Richard Broscombe, Facebook

Try getting in contact with Sony if your console is in warranty – otherwise, you're out of luck friend. *MAG* is terrible (the game that is)
Joe Ives, Facebook

Phew... it's an acquired taste, but we think Zipper Interactive's shooter could surprise



Lightning bolt We're holding off going through *MGS* again until Trophies arrive.

Trophy woes

As a first class Trophy-whore, nothing pleases me more than showing off my beautiful collection. As my internet was down for the weekend, I decided to do the last couple Trophies on games like *Uncharted* and *Eyepet* (it's a good game!) before showing off my Platinums on Monday.

So after spending hours collecting the final few, I go to sync my Trophies. DNS error. Can't connect to the server. Timed out. Error. Error. Error. Why must PSN torture me?! I spend hours attempting to find the source of the problem. It's not my internet. It's not that my PS3 has no memory. After asking around, I find that a number of my friends have the same problem. Can you shed some light on this somewhat infuriating problem?

Tom Irvine, email

Quite a few PS3 users are having issues with Trophy syncing. It seems that the problems began after firmware update 3.10 hit. Firmware 3.15 has rectified the issue for some users, but lots are still having issues syncing. Your Trophies are still saved to your hard drive though, so don't panic too much. Until Sony rectify the situation entirely, clicking your profile on the right side of the XMB and trying to sync from there appears to be the best option.

PSNMail

Mail us at psm3uk

Green eyed monster

I'm sick of xbox getting all the exclusive games. *Forza*, Left 4 Dead, *GTA* DLC. Where are our PS3-only bonuses?

Jazzhanded

Maybe early on in PS3's lifespan but now? *Uncharted 2*, *Ratchet and Clank*, *Killzone 2*, *Demon's Souls*. Don't forget we're getting Rockstar's *Agent*.

Arcade perfect

What I want is to put on my PS3 and load up a game which I can get straight into and kick some ass arcade-style. This is why I can't get enough of Nazi Zombies. What a money making franchise this is for Treyarch. I for one would be willing to download a new map every month not only killing zombies but laughing at other players when they get caught by not sticking to the game plan which, as we all know, is never get caught on your own.

So is there any news on Map Pack 4? I thought there would have been a new one by now and I think I'm not alone because the zombie community are flocking back now after the *MW2* euphoria. Yes, it's great too but it doesn't have zombies.

Peter, email

There are still plenty of people playing *World at War*'s Nazi Zombies. It just shows how popular a well-made co-op mode can be. *MW2* gave us the superb Spec Ops, but for players who prefer a more free-form style of play for up to four players, we'd still recommend Nazi Zombies.

Zombie nation Nazi Zombies has more fans than regular multi-player.

some people when it finally gets released. It's certainly deeper than most PS3 gun-fests. What's the best game to play on Christmas day with all the family?

Jo Daniel, Email

Uncharted 2 is a breathtaking and charming romp but *Guitar Hero/Rock Band*/*SingStar* and one of the Buzz series are probably safer bets for non-gamers.

More podcasts please. You have nice voices.

Clifford, Email

We just have enough time to do the one a month sorry. Don't forget about the DVD voiceovers...

The best of PSM3MAG.COM

This month's best forum thread

Topic: *The last decade in gaming?*

What are your thoughts on the last ten years in gaming? Has anything significantly moved on in our beloved hobby in any ways and what have been the games/consoles you think pioneered it? Also, game of the decade anyone?

RandyTandy

This is the last full decade I will be gaming for, not because gaming has got any worse (it has, but it's irrelevant in this matter), but because I don't really care for gaming as much as I used to. As for game of the decade I would say *Pyschonauts* or *Beyond Good & Evil*. Other than that all my other favourite games were in the 90s. Yeah the noughties has had good games but not a great deal of them have been outstanding...

zozobra

Quote of the month

As uttered on the PSM3 forums

"For me, online gaming generally is crazy mental cool"

by HoP5

Gaming was at its best in the 90's. The games from back then seem to leave great memories and a good feeling. They weren't as serious as they are now and you seemed to have a lot more fun playing them. I don't know what it is about games today but i just don't seem to have as much fun. They'll never beat the nostalgia that 90's gaming brings.

StokedUp

Well, I enjoy gaming today more than the 90s. *Burn Zombie Burn*, game of the decade!

Multiplayerking

The standout game this decade for me was *MGS2*. While I prefered *MGS3*, the second was the most surprising. About two weeks later I decided to play *MGS2* for the first time. Been a *MGS* fanboy ever since. *Timesplitters* was another.

Crackajack

I never did PC gaming or Xbox, so went from PS2 to PS3 and was amazed by how cool competition online with your fellow man could be. The *Motorstorm* and Resistance series online were golden moments for me as a result.

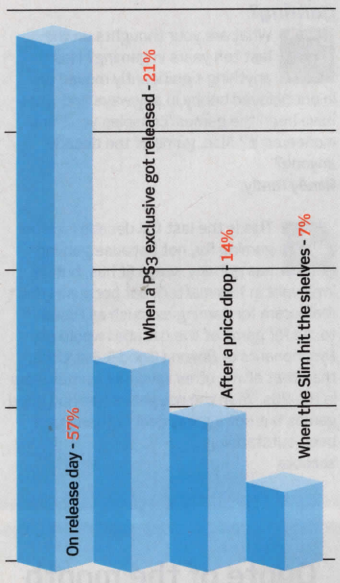
HoP5

Visit psm3mag.com and have your say

Poll Position

We ask. You answer

This month When did you buy your PS3 console?



Next Month What's top of your PS3 wishlist? More exclusives, better apps (Sky Player etc.), online features or quicker installs?

To vote check out the 'Poll Position' thread in the 'PSM3 Magazine' forum on www.psm3mag.com

Soul glow *Demon's Souls* must be one of the most imported games ever.

Just a small matter

I've been reading your magazine for roughly seven years and I really enjoy it, but I'm getting a little frustrated as to why none of the PSP games you've reviewed have cracked the 90+ rating. Even worse you give some really bias assumptions. For example, when you reviewed *Rock Band Unplugged* you say that the game isn't as fun without plastic peripherals. Although that maybe true, it isn't fair to berate it like that. *Resistance Retribution* is another example of a game which deserved better, you said that the controls were iffy and gave it an 81%, remember these are the same guys who made *Syphon Filter*. Besides it does more that the other *Resistance* titles could and implemented a fantastic PSP experience. *LBP* on PSP also got a lower mark because there was no multi-player functionality, this is absurd because the developer clearly stated that it wasn't a big part of *LBP* and there wasn't enough space on the UMD to support it. Those gripes not withstanding I still really value your opinions and like reading why you gave them their scores.

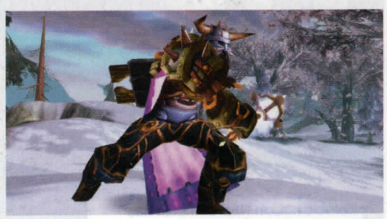
Richard Davie, email

We always review PSP games against other titles on the market at the time. Comparisons to each game's bigger PS3 brothers are useful because they help us to establish how game mechanics work. As for low scores in general, we've awarded lots of PSP games scores over 90%. *LocoRoco*, *Burnout Legends*, *GTA: Vice City Stories* all scored very well in the mag.

Over the borderline

Although I love *Borderlands* to pieces – literally to pieces in the case of my exploding shotgun – it only makes me want to see a PlayStation 3 port of *Diablo III*. Collecting hundreds of unique guns is fun, but the loot in the *Diablo* games was more interesting, and the world was more appealing too. I know point-and-clicking doesn't work very well with a controller, but do you think we'll ever see *Diablo III* on PS3, or have Blizzard given up on developing games for consoles? While we're at it, how about a PS3 version of Blizzard's *World of Warcraft*?

I know you can play these games on the PC, but I'd rather play them sitting on the sofa, in front of a big TV – not hunched over my desk. The *PlayStation 3* is basically a mini-computer these days, so it seems weird that some games are still off-limits, like MMOs, strategy titles or *Diablo* clones. And it's a shame that the ones that do make it across – like *Final Fantasy XI*, *Phantasy Star Universe* or *Command & Conquer 3* – tend to be worse than the PC versions, thanks to rubbish control schemes. I don't want to have to keep



MMO face Most PS3 users have broadband, so expect MMOs to thrive.

PSNMail

Mail us at psm3uk

Heavy Burden

Heavy Rain looks really boring and super-depressing.

Beanbeanbean23

Depressing? Maybe. But boring? From what we've played, your first playthrough will be absolutely captivating

Firm woes

I'm sick of minor firmware updates. They takes ages to download.

hatedrakesnake56

We think it's worth the wait for the new features. Don't forget you can visit bit.ly/7UFEuQ to get them via a PC/Mac

"You What?"

Thanks for writing. No. Really

Does anyone else love the feel of the latest mag? It's beefy.
Iwill, forum

And it's only going to get beefier, with shinier covers and thicker paper. Woot.
Who's the best?

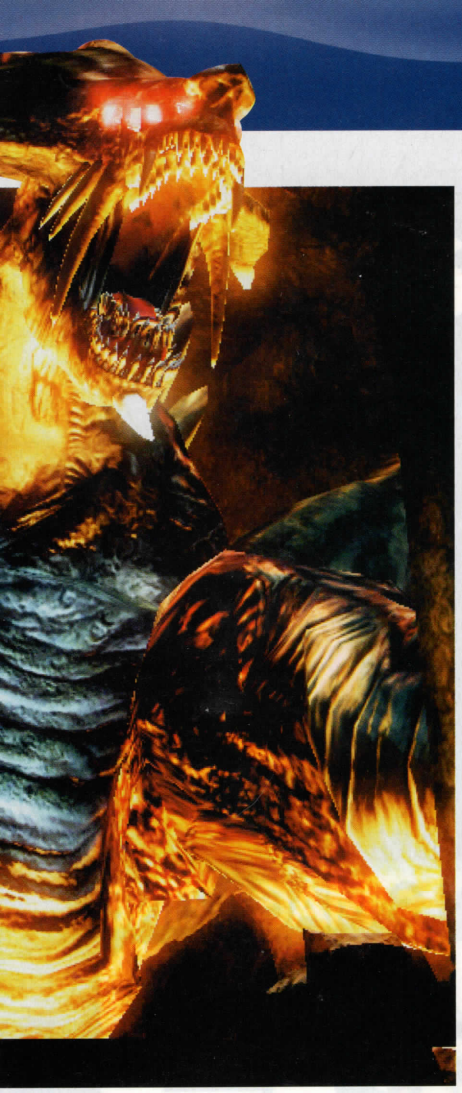
Jackolad, email

Owen (because he wrote this).
I think making use of homophones and homonyms means you can write well.
spaceman_DOUG, forum

What is the largest building in the world? The library because it has the most stories. LOL.
I need *GT5*.

Alex Martin, email

So do we. Don't worry – the wait is almost over. And a demo just hit PSN.



forking out money for computer upgrades, just to keep up with these kinds of games. The PS3 can easily handle them, so why don't more developers bring them to consoles?
Andrew Johnson, email

Borderlands was a nice compromise, but we'd also like to see *Diablo* come to PSN, even if it was just a remake of the older games. Blizzard COO Paul Sams recently said that a version of *Diablo III* might end up appearing on consoles in the future as long as the "gameplay experience ends up the same." Considering PS3 supports mice and keyboards, we don't really see the issue. As for us getting *World Of Warcraft* on PS3– don't hold your breath. Blizzard have repeatedly stated that it would be a 'herculean' effort porting their enromous, massively multi-player game to console due to the size and complexity of the world. It's far more likely that we'll get one of the newer MMOs that are due to come out in the new year such as *Star Trek Online* or *Star Wars Old Republic*.

Taxing imports

Like everyone else in the world, PSM3 seems to be going gaga over *Demon's Souls*, but I've one question no one ever seems to address: when's the game coming out in the UK? It's a bit infuriating to read all this adoration for a game we're unable to play, unless we import it from some dodgy website.

With most games on PS3 being region-free, isn't it about time that all games stopped being region-locked anyway, and we're allowed to play whatever game from whatever country we choose? It's especially stupid in the digital age, when a lot of games can be bought online and then downloaded to your console – no boxed copy or expensive shipping process needed.

Why, then, are there regional versions of the PSN, and how can Sony possibly justify restricting specific content to certain countries? A game like *Demon's Souls* is obviously niche, making it difficult to find a publisher – but if we could just download it from PSN that wouldn't be a problem, and we would all be dying repeatedly in Boletaria right now. I want to die repeatedly in Boletaria – when's *Demon's Souls* coming to the UK?
John Tyler, email

We understand your frustration regarding *Demon's Souls* but unfortunately, we still haven't got a confirmed date for the European release (or a publisher to ask).

Still, not all import sites are 'dodgy'. We recommend rechi.com or play-asia if you do fancy an import. They're both selling the US version of *Demon's Souls* and offer quick delivery. As for the different PSN stores, it's all down to copyright issues and is unlikely to change anytime soon. Sorry.

Tat object of the month

The 'best' of the game-related bilge delivered to the PSM3 office

Dark Void Sick bag and safety card

Well, this really is 'lol' isn't it? A *Dark Void* branded sick bag and safety card. It's funny because you fly about in *Dark Void*, just like a plane, so it makes sense that you'd have a safety card and sick bag handy. Not the worst tat we've received but we prefer more useful things such as mouse-mats, mugs and dodgy t-shirts

Sicko Average tat for an average game. Justice.

PSM3's Top Four Readers

Be heard. Join PSM3's online army today

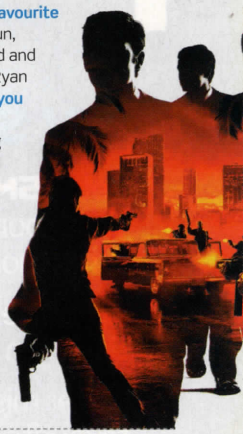
EMAIL

Who are you? Tilly Reid.
Where are you from? London.
What bands are you listening to at the moment? Abingdon Boys School, The Dresden Dolls and Vivaldi.
What's your favourite game of all time? That's a mean question, like picking a favourite child. Probably *Kingdom Hearts 2*.
What are your favourite films? Star Wars, Repo! The Genetic Opera.
How long have you been reading PSM3? Since your last ever issue of PSM2. I remember you thought *Haze* would be good (el oh el).

THE BIG Q **What's the last game you got addicted to?** *Final Fantasy IX*. It's so bright and happy compared to the angst of some of the others.

EMAIL

Who are you? Craig Nicol.
Where are you from? Ballater, Scotland.
What bands are you listening to at the moment? A mix like the Prodigy, Green Day etc.
What's your favourite game of all time? Leisure Suit Larry on PS2 - what a laugh!
What are your favourite films? Naked Gun, Dukes Of Hazard and Saving Private Ryan
How long have you been reading PSM3? Not long since Issue 115 I think.



THE BIG Q **What's the last game you got addicted to?** *The Godfather 2* – a great game.

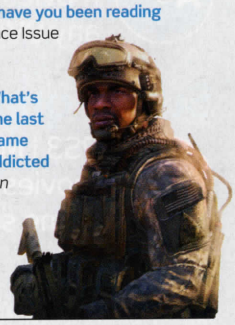
EMAIL

Who are you? Richard Cutler
Where are you from? Halesowen.
What bands are you listening to at the moment? Biffy Clyro, Exit Ten, Escape the Fate, Lamb of God.
What's your favourite game of all time? I'll go for *Metal Gear Solid*.
What are your favourite films? Goodfella's, Inglorious Basterds, Saw (but they should have stopped at 3).
How long have you been reading PSM3? Ever since you guys started giving the best reviews innit – so that's ages!

THE BIG Q **What's the last game you got addicted to?** Currently it's *COD MW2*, but before that, *Uncharted 2*.

EMAIL

Who are you? Mark Potter
Where are you from? West Sussex.
What bands are you listening to at the moment? Kraftwerk, Cornelius, Dntel, Alec Empire.
What's your favourite game of all time? *Metal Gear Solid*
What are your favourite films? My Neighbour Totoro, Blade Runner, Dawn of the Dead (1978 version), The Dark Knight and Ghostbusters.
How long have you been reading PSM3? Since Issue one.



THE BIG Q **What's the last game you got addicted to?** *Modern Warfare 2*

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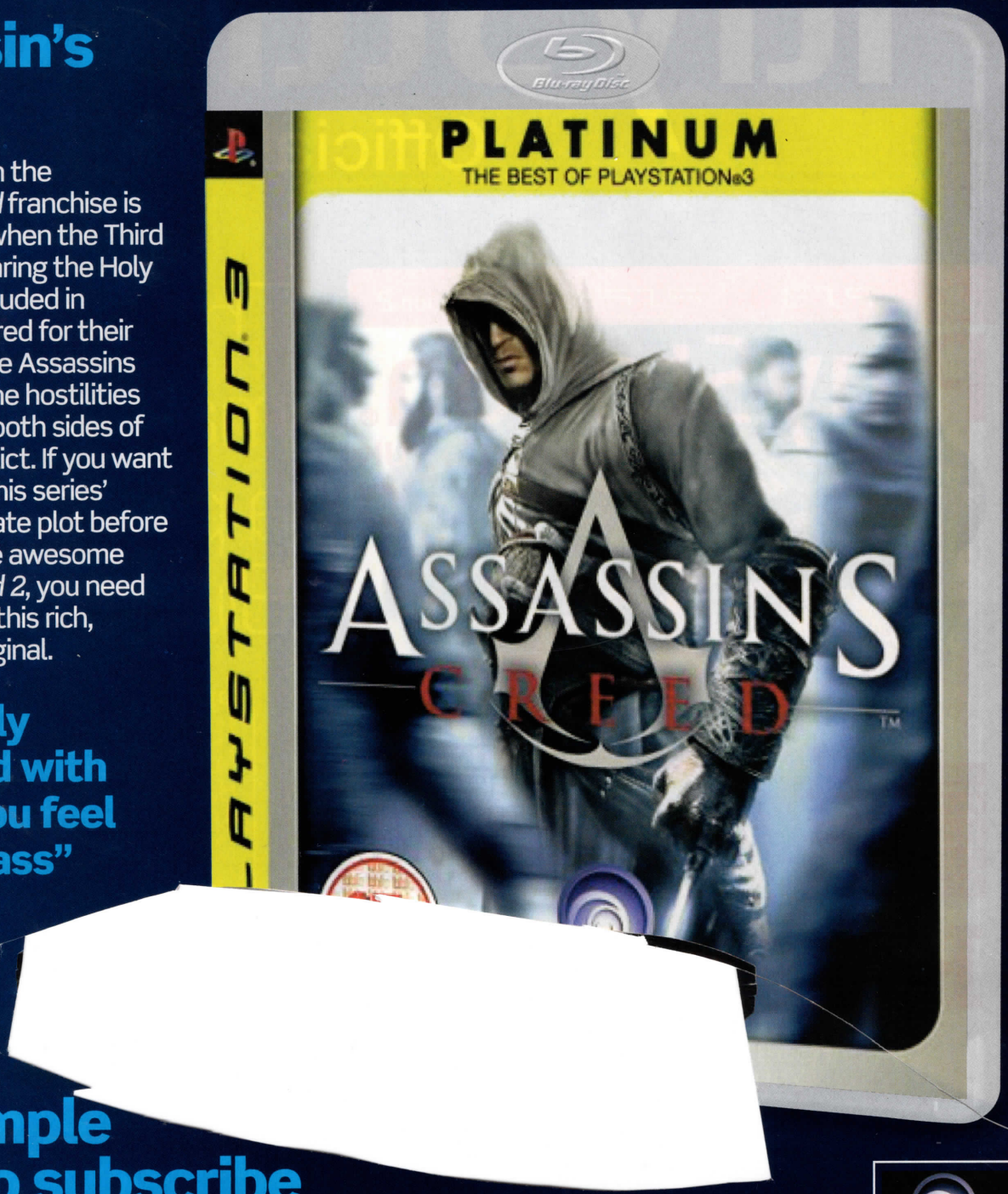
Assassin's Creed

The first game in the *Assassin's Creed* franchise is set in 1191 AD, when the Third Crusade was tearing the Holy Land apart. Shrouded in secrecy and feared for their ruthlessness, the Assassins intend to stop the hostilities by suppressing both sides of the bloody conflict. If you want to catch up on this series' incredible, intricate plot before you dive into the awesome *Assassin's Creed 2*, you need to play through this rich, atmospheric original.

"It's mostly concerned with making you feel like a badass"
PSM3, issue 95



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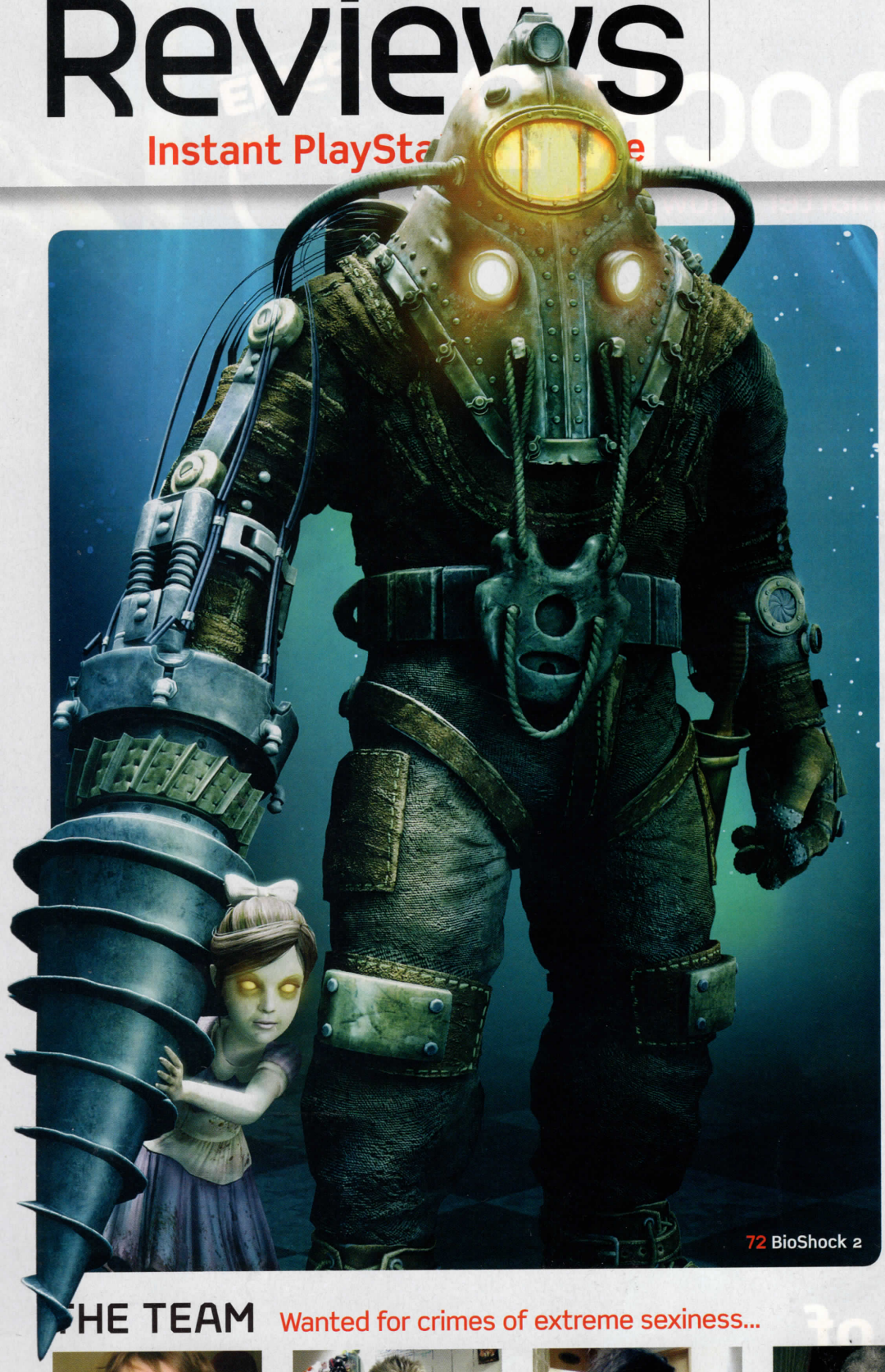
HIGHLIGHTS

***BioShock 2* goes dark**
Kratos gets mad in HD
***RIDE* falls flat on its arse**



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"Braid proves continually inventive, perplexing, beautiful and clever. PSN welcomes a true classic"

Braid page 84

PSM3 BUY IT

'Buy It' Award
If you see this, then you should buy that game.

THE TEAM

Wanted for crimes of extreme sexiness...

Daniel Dawkins
Specialist in Sports games, hating on *Assassin's Creed 2* irrationally.
Playing *PES*: "I won't be swayed by the *FIFA* turncoats. I won't!"

Andy Hartup
Specialist in Action games, scarves, backing the underdog.
Playing *Borderlands*: "Incidentally, my favourite Madonna song."

Andy Kelly
Specialist in Shooters, photo manipulation, late adoption of HD.
Playing *BioShock 2*: "It's *electric*! A real *shocker*! A total *buzz*! etc."

Owen Hill
Specialist in Music games, furry hats, hoarding documents.
Playing *PixelJunk Shooter*: "Funny, 'cause I failed physics at school."

Alex Evans
Specialist in Lending a helping hand, bringing us sweets.
Playing *Tony Hawk RIDE*: "I was *board* playing this. Eh? *EH*?"

Format PS3 | **Price** £50 | **Release** February 9
Pub 2K Games | **Dev** 2K Marin
Multi-player 1-8 | **Trophies** 50

BioShock 2

Tougher, stronger, smarter – how *BioShock 2* reflects its new Big Daddy hero...

Cover Game

KNOW IT NOW

- A rich, morally complex storyline? ✓
- Dynamic tactical combat? ✓
- As good as the original? ✓
- But a massive departure from it? ✗

BioShock is a hard act to follow, but this sequel is definitely a worthy successor to what is regarded as one of the decade's best, smartest games. In a lot of ways it's even *better* than its predecessor. It's a more competent shooter, with vastly improved AI and a more varied palette of weapons and Plasmids. The story is tighter and more focused, offering a number of challenging moral junction points, and the options for tactical play are much broader.

In Rapture, everything has a place and a purpose. It's a thriving, functioning ecosystem, with its own food chain and set of clearly defined rules. And as Subject Delta, a prototype Big Daddy, it's your goal to learn these systems, exploit them and ultimately become the dominant species in Andrew Ryan's unique, tainted underwater paradise.

Beyond the sea

The year is 1968. On the surface the world is alive with social revolution and the rise of the counter-culture, but Rapture is still frozen in time – a decaying, decadent monument to Andrew Ryan's ideology of the self.

"A decade of disrepair has left the city rusted and mutated"

PSM3
BUY IT

"Glowing coral and shimmering flora have sprung up on the seabed"

Sister act Taking on a Big Sister up-close is foolish – use traps and Plasmids and keep your distance to wear her down.

A decade of disrepair has left the city rusted and mutated, and it's a much more foreboding space to explore. Most areas have been plunged into darkness, and freezing seawater bleeds from every cracked surface.

Ryan's legacy You killed him in the first game, but Ryan's voice still echoes through Rapture; in audio diaries and his insane Ryan Amusements theme park, complete with wax models.

But there's also beauty to the decay. ADAM has leaked into the ocean around the city, giving birth to bizarre new species of plants. Glowing coral and other shimmering, otherworldly flora have sprung up on the seabed, adding colour to the sections where Delta plods along the ocean floor, moving between levels.

New areas include Ryan Amusements, a twisted propaganda theme park; Pauper's Drop, a makeshift shanty town built by Rapture's downtrodden working classes; Persephone, a detention centre built to house dangerous troublemakers and 'parasites'; and Fontaine Futuristics, a Plasmid development laboratory. And hidden in each level there's a crazed Rapture resident pulling the strings, who must be confronted before you can continue onwards.

The game is structurally almost identical to the first; a linear ghost train with a 'boss' waiting at the end of each level. In Fontaine Futuristics, your foil is Gilbert Alexander, original designer of the Big Daddies. He's taken control of the area's security systems and buzzes around you in a customised bot, taunting you, with a single, wild eye flickering on a video screen.

What makes him an interesting foe is that, as he toys with you, audio diaries he recorded before ADAM turned him insane give you instructions on how to shut down the security and defeat him. It's an interesting dynamic, and an example of *BioShock 2*'s sophisticated storytelling. And when you finally reach him... well, we won't spoil it, but it's one of the game's best reveals. Which is another thing this sequel has more of; genuine shocks.

Element of surprise

Subject Delta may seem like little more than a sentient diving suit at first, but you grow more sympathetic towards him as you learn about his tortured past. But, more importantly, he's a pleasure to

Squids in A vista to rival the legendary Rapture reveal in the first game. A tough act to follow, but 2K have pulled it off.

Online

Multi-player impressions

Two hours with *BioShock*'s tactical new online modes

We'll have a full in-depth review and guide to *BioShock 2*'s multi-player in the coming issues, but for now here are some initial impressions from a two hour session we had, led by 2K Marin senior producer Melissa Miller. We started with 'Survival of the Fittest', a basic free for all. Stunning foes with the Electro Bolt Plasmid then beating them to death with a melee weapon was our preferred method of killing, It has the same punchy feel as in single-player.

Then we tried 'ADAM Grab', which is our favourite. Eight players battle to hold a Little Sister for as long as possible. It's a real rush grabbing her and darting furiously around the level as every other player chases after you, guns blazing. Frantic, challenging and frequently hilarious, we can see it becoming a fan favourite.

Lastly, we played a few raucous sessions of 'Capture the Sister'. This is like a familiar CTF match, but with one player randomly selected to be a Big Daddy, in charge of protecting a Little Sister (the 'flag'), with the help of three other players (regular Splicers).

We were seriously impressed with the game's multi-player mode. A lot of work has gone into balancing the Plasmids and weapons, and it's a much more tactical alternative to the hyperactive violence of most other online first-person shooters. We also love the 'menu', which is your own interactive apartment in Rapture that you can wander freely around, listening to music and audio diaries unlocked as you progress.

Team players Regular Splicers are still pretty easy to deal with, but in the sequel the danger arrives when they hunt you down in packs. Also, this time they can randomly toss grenades to flush you out of cover.

Brute force The Brutes' size belies their speed, making them the toughest form of Splicer in the game. Be ready for them.

Gameplay

So what's new?

An at-a-glance guide to some of *BioShock 2*'s new features

WEAPONS

The drill, rivet gun, Gatling gun, spear gun and remote hacking tool are all brand new, while the grenade launcher and shotgun return with a few tweaks. The shotgun is now double-barrelled, for example.

DILEMMAS

We can't reveal any specifics, but there are now moral decisions to be made beyond harvesting or saving the Little Sisters. Character modelling has also massively improved, making them more emotive and realistic.

HACKING

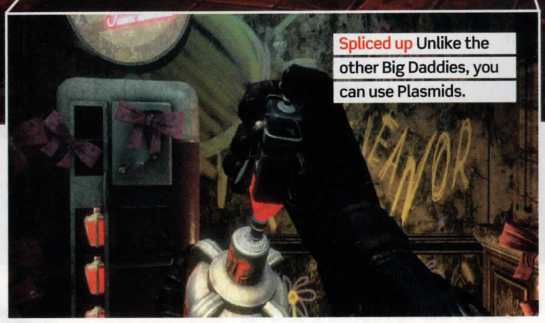
Gone is the 'Pipe Mania' mini-game of yore. A timing-based variation has replaced it, and, crucially, it doesn't pause the action. You now have to hit a rapidly moving slider in highlighted green areas.

ENEMIES

New, evolved Spider Splicers can climb all over the scenery and have a nasty habit of unexpectedly dropping on you. Brute Splicers can toss bits of scenery at you. The Rumbler Big Daddy is new too.

"Brute Splicers can toss bits of scenery at you"

Father's day Eleanor, the Little Sister bound to Subject Delta, leaves you gifts as you move through Rapture, including Plasmids and tonics.



Spliced up Unlike the other Big Daddies, you can use Plasmids.

control. The smallest change is also the most significant – you can now dual-wield Plasmids and weapons. Unloading electrified buckshot into a Splicer with a fully upgraded shotgun – as you simultaneously spew fire from your palm with the level 3 'Incinerate!' Plasmid – gives you an incredible feeling of power.

Upgrade any weapon to level 3 and it earns a new ability. The drill lets you deflect bullets, shotgun blasts are electrified and the rivet gun randomly sets Splicers on fire. Combined with the Plasmids, this makes battles with bigger enemies hilariously anarchic – you freeze them, shock them and set them alight; all the while peppering them with bullets. And there are dozens of elemental combinations, all depending on how you've chosen to customise Delta's load out and skills.

The Rumbler

Before Vita-Chambers would make taking down a Big Daddy a matter of time rather than skill, but now the Little Sisters can use ADAM to heal the Rumbler as you return to the scene of battle.

Thought process

But that's only one side of *BioShock 2*'s combat. If you run and gun your way through the entire game wildly tossing Plasmids around, you're missing out on some of its best features. One of the best opportunities to experiment with the game's wealth of tactical Plasmids and gadgets is a battle in Persephone where you're forced to fight *two* Big Sisters (Rapture's newest, strongest enemy) at once.

First, traps. Fire a Trap Rivet into the ground, or a wall, and a beam of light – a kind of trip wire – will shine

Fave Feature

"Torturing Splicers with brutal elemental combos"

"Watch as a Splicer shatters into a hundred sparkling pieces mid-flight"

Hidden and dangerous The Splicers, now mutated and disfigured by ADAM, still cling to their past lives and try to hide their distorted features.

out of it. You can plug the level with *dozens* of these, and any time one of the Big Sisters steps into the light the rivet will fire directly into her. Oh, and if you have that upgrade we mentioned earlier for the rivet gun, the Trap Rivets will set her on fire, too.

Then you have turrets. These can be dropped anywhere, and will both distract and harm any foe that steps in front of them. Best of all, though, is the Cyclone Trap Plasmid. This hurls the enemy into the air and smashes them against the ceiling. You can even zap the whirlpool with another Plasmid, and it'll take on its elemental properties. So as well as flinging foes through the air, it'll freeze or shock them, too.

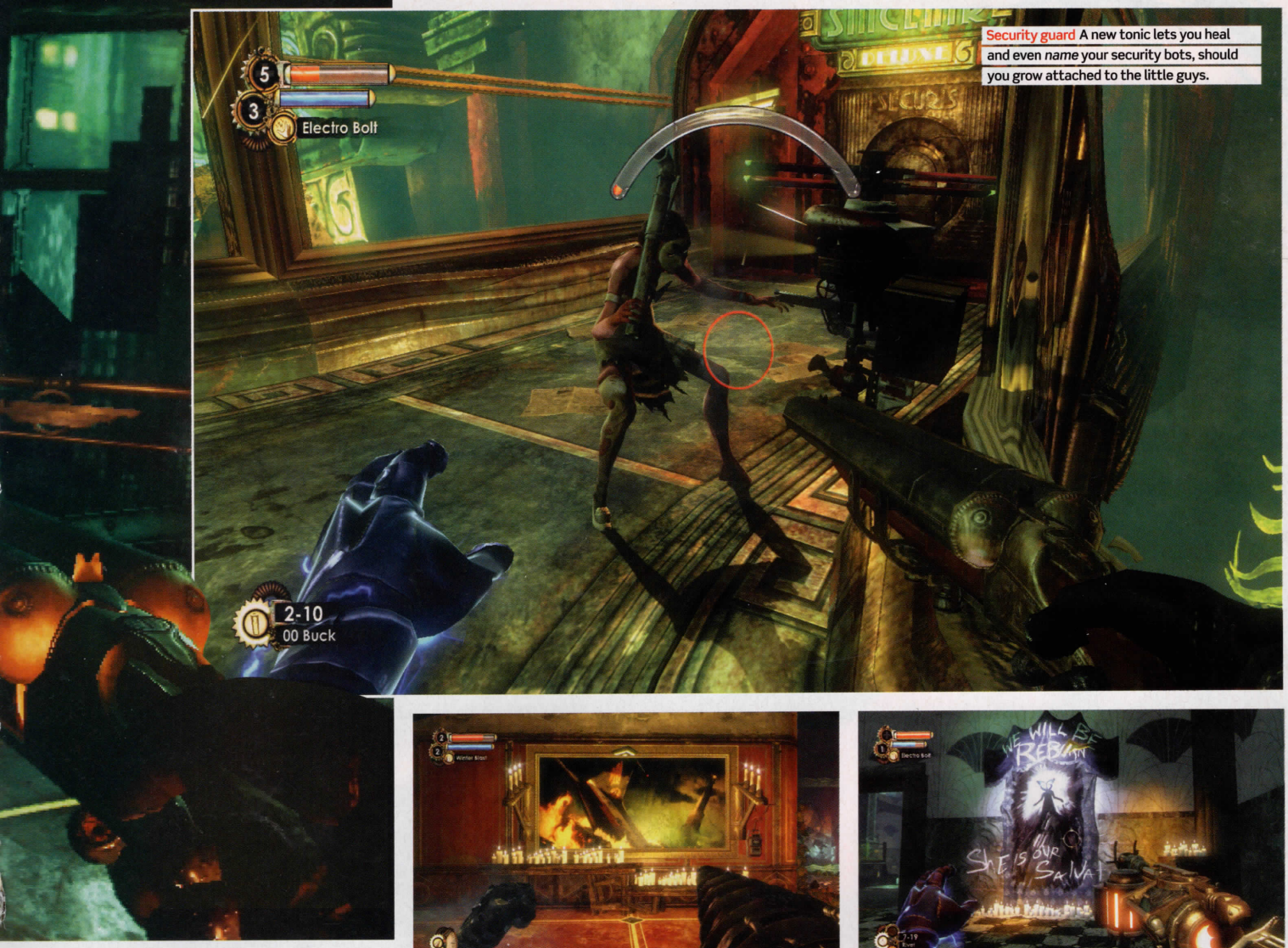
Mind control This bizarre ADAM-infused plant forms the basis of the Hypnotise Plasmid.

Familiar faces

Some of Rapture's residents will be familiar to fans, including Bridgette Tenenbaum, one of the people responsible for discovering and engineering the Little Sisters.

One of our favourite tricks for tormenting regular Splicers is loading a Cyclone Trap with Winter Blast. As they're thrown into the air, and frozen in a block of ice, you can shoot them with the shotgun and watch as they shatter into a hundred sparkling pieces mid-flight.

A combination of all three is deadly, and you can observe safely from a distance while the Sisters get caught in your devious tangle of traps. But if you want to be even sneakier, break out the Hypnotise Plasmid. Hit one of them and she'll attack the other, and the two will engage each other in a fight. If you've upgraded the Plasmid, the effect lasts longer, and it's possible for one of the Big Sisters to kill the



Security guard A new tonic lets you heal and even *name* your security bots, should you grow attached to the little guys.

other entirely as you watch. Then you can deal with the other as you see fit.

Crash and burn The plane crash from *BioShock*'s intro forms the basis of this surreal religious painting in Father Wales' church.

Lamb of God Sofia Lamb's Splicer followers have created shrines to her throughout Rapture's leaking hallways.

A slave obeys

Another area in which *BioShock 2* excels is storytelling. It has narrative depth to match the complexity of the combat, and it's a rare instance of a morality system in a game affecting the ending in a tangible, worthwhile way. We finished the game in a room with two other people, and all three of us got different endings. We can't go into too much detail without leaking spoilers, but this time your behaviour has further-reaching effects than a simple 'good' or 'bad' ending, or receiving more or less ADAM.

Yes, the Little Sisters are back, and you can 'harvest' them for ADAM as before. But, being a Big Daddy, you're now able to 'adopt' them. This gives you the opportunity to grab more ADAM by leading your charge around the city as she gathers it from corpses. Of course, this sends the Splicers into a frenzy and you have to defend her as she gathers it. Another opportunity to make use of your traps and tactics.

And, like almost every decision in Rapture, doing this impacts the ending.

While we're talking about the plot, new villain, Sofia Lamb is superbly written. While Andrew Ryan built Rapture as a place where people could work and achieve for themselves, Lamb is of the opposite belief; a Marxist who thinks every person has a duty to the world. But one extreme belief is no better than another, and she's become corrupted, zealous, and every bit as dangerous as Ryan. It's a compelling motivation for a well-rounded character, and her icy demeanour makes her a terrifying opponent.

Deep blue sea

With a smarter morality system, greatly improved combat, a more customisable character and a twist to rival "Would you kindly?", *BioShock 2* is everything we hoped the sequel would be. And although it shares a common structure with the original – with some mission objectives you'll *swear* you've done before – it's different enough in tone and style to feel unique.

Unless the familiarity *really* gets to you, you're going to love *BioShock 2*. It's a lovingly crafted, carefully constructed masterpiece of narrative richness and smart game mechanics. It can even be enjoyed as a straight-up shooter thanks to its innovative, tactile combat system. Reimagined Rapture, despite being familiar, is still a wondrous place to explore making this seemingly impossible sequel worthy of the *BioShock* name. **Andy Kelly**

PSM3 Verdict

***BioShock 2* contains...**
Sea slugs | Underwater bits
Plot twists | Sharks | A brothel

Overall Tops the original in terms of storytelling and combat. Brilliant.

93

Format PS3 | **Price** $40 | **Release** Out now (US)
Pub SCEA | **Dev** Bluepoint Games
Multi-player None | **Trophies** 71

KNOW IT NOW

- Kratos' first two adventures in HD? ☑
- Epic battles that feel great today? ☑
- The hellish poles of Hades? ☑
- A bunch of new content for fans? ☒

"You'll wade through harpies, minotaurs, screaming sirens and most other mythical beasts"

God of War Collection

Kratos remastered for PS3... but far from tamed

God Of War 3 looks like a 'first generation PlayStation 4 title', according to one enthusiastic US journalist (see page 38). Curious, then, that *God of War Collection* – comprising the orginal PS2 games, repackaged on one handy blu-ray disc and remastered in HD – looks like a PlayStation 2.5 game. It may be a purely cosmetic overhaul – astutely handled by Bluepoint Games, the developer behind PSN's *Blast Factor* – but Kratos' PS2 adventures have lost little of their brutal substance.

Twice as nice

The disc comes with the brilliant *God Of War* and the even better *God Of War II*, except the visuals are delivered in 720P. Nothing has been lost in translation from the PS2 version to PS3, so it plays exactly the same. For the uninitiated, *GOW* set the benchmark for hack and slash ultra-violence, twinned to epic screen-size boss battles. Oh, and anti-hero Kratos is a mad man. Armed with the Blades of Chaos (read: massive slicey blades) and coated with – in a plot twist that goes to some way to explaining why he's so furious – the *ashes of his scorched family*, he wades through harpies, minotaurs, screaming sirens and most other mythical beasts you care to mention. He's also packing magic spells including Poseidon's Rage (*GOW*) – an electric blast radius that fries all within it or Typhon's Bane – basically a glorified bow and arrow.

In *GOW* he's a mortal working with the Gods to knock Ares – the original God Of War – down a peg or two. Problem is, Ares stands taller than Peter Crouch at the top of the Empire State building, which is pretty tall. Thus begins an adventure through Athens and down to Hades in search of the tools to eff him up. In *GOW II*, Kratos is tricked into relinquishing all his powers by the vengeful Gods so he teams up with the Titans to teach his old holy chums a lesson in revenge. Across both games you'll kill thousands of enemies without batting an eye-lid. OK, maybe you'll wince a little when he pulls an archer apart with his bare hands.

Apart from the glossy visuals, both games being on one disc and the obligatory Trophies, *God Of War* Collection doesn't contain anything else you could call new. But it's not like we expected new levels, weapons and a custom soundtrack. Hell no.

What we want, and what we're pretty sure you'll agree with when you play it, is a stunning reminder

PSM3 BUY IT

Mast murder Walloping the huge hydra in the opening sections of the original *GOW* is still amazing. Piercing its scaly head on a broken mast is also a thing of beauty.

of why *God Of War* made such an impact on PS2 in the first place.

From the opening moments of both games, you can't help but marvel at the beauty – and scale – of the environments; revelling in glee at the undimmed, visceral, brutality of Kratos' attacks. Countless games have tried and failed to match the *epic* scale and stylish kills of *God Of War* since it first appeared in 2005 and they've all been left bloody-nosed. There's a clutch of games on PS3 in 2010 that are still aiming for that magic formula with Sega's *Bayonetta* and EA's *Dante's Inferno* the front-runners. But while *God Of War Collection* highlights how some of the visuals haven't aged well (especially the untouched cut-scenes) these HD remakes still play great and don't feel out of place on PS3. For us, the opening to *God Of War II*, where you methodically take down a giant angry statue, stills ranks as one of *the* greatest openers in any game we've played. And with this collector's edition's spit and polish, it looks even better than before.

What we didn't remember about either game, is how hard they are. It seems unlikely that Sony would've advised Bluepoint Games to up the

Polished

Spot the difference

This HD rub-up depicts Kratos in his best light

PS2 edition The murky textures and jagged edges of the PS2 version look even more ravaged by time. But as for the HD remake...

PS3 edition No more jaggies, smoother textures and, of course, a 720P resolution. Kratos' muscles has never looked so sharp and defined.

Sibling rivalry

In the secret videos which you unlock at the end of the original game, you get one called Birth of a Beast. This is the story of Kratos and his long lost brother. Surely, he'll make an appearance in *GOW III*?

Booby prizes A-ha! Look, its a set of boobs! Two sets, in fact! Ha, ha, ha. Amazing. Still look ropey, mind.

Heads, you lose The mini-Medusas are as annoying as ever. Good job you can rip their heads off still.

Malice in chains The awesome Blades of Chaos, that are bound to Kratos by chains, make for some spectacular light-shows when you link combos together.

ante in terms of difficulty, but there's a Trophy specifically called Getting My Ass Kicked, which is a bronze award for dying so many times that you're offered Easy mode. We don't remember the beasts being so tricky to dispatch of first time around, especially the super-strength minotaurs. But we see this extra difficulty as a new challenge for us to enjoy, and absolutely *not* a steady decrease in our gaming skills.

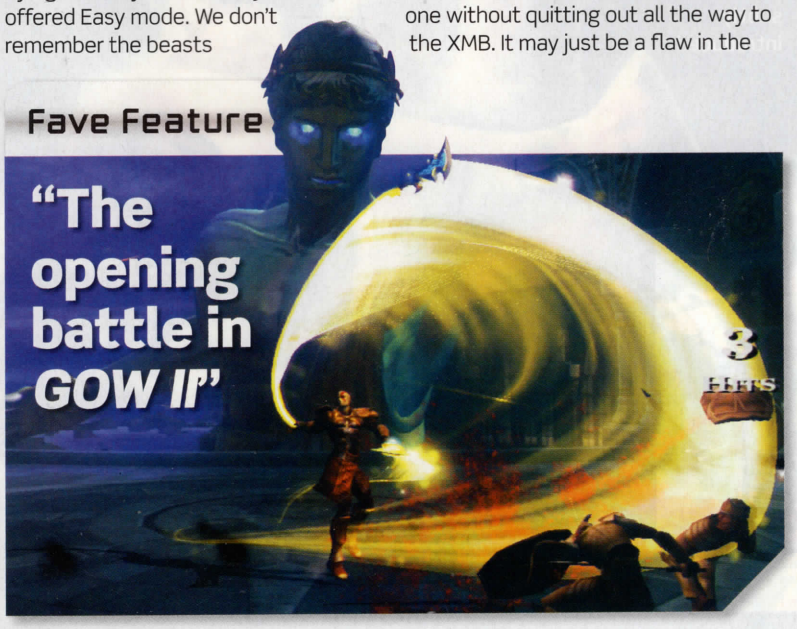
One slightly annoying thing about *God Of War Collection* is that once you enter either game's menu, you can't simply drop out and fire up the other one without quitting out all the way to the XMB. It may just be a flaw in the version that we're playing but it's pretty grating if you fancy a change halfway through. Another gripe is the fact that the challenge rooms aren't unlocked from the off. These bastard-hard rooms consist of special challenges like firing a giant stake into as many undead creatures as you can in a set time limit. Or fling as many enemies off a flying platform as possible with your throwing skills. But alas, you'll have to work Kratos' grey dangly bits to get them.

Spiky subject
The devs are clearly aware of those frustratingly difficult spinning spike columns that you have to climb in Hades during *GOW*, as there's a gold Trophy for scaling it without taking a hit. Yeah, right.

Play catch up

If you're in any doubt about *God Of War*'s importance to gaming, let alone the PlayStation brand, here's the perfect chance to get acquainted with the titles that pushed PS2 to its limits – uniting arcane, but precise, Japanese play dynamics to Western accessibility and production bombast. Hopefully, we'll get a slice of the action before *God Of War III* hits in 2010 – rumour is *GOW Collection* will launch in Feb, with *GOW3* in April. While we advise you to wait rather than import it (the game' s already out in the US and runs on a UK PS3); you won't be disappointed with Kratos' HD adventures. That ashen grey look was meant for 720P. A hulking reinvention? By Zeus' ragged beard, no – but you'll sure like Kratos when he's angry. **Nathan Irvine**

Fave Feature



PSM3 Verdict

***God of War Collection* contains...**
Lots of hack | Plenty of slash | Bags of gore | Breathtaking bosses

Overall Nothing new but two of PS2's finest offerings in full HD.

85

Format PS3 | Price £7 | Release Out now
Pub Hothead Games | Dev Jonathan Blow
Multi-player None | Trophies 12

Braid

The ultimate puzzle platformer does the time warp again

KNOW IT NOW

- Retro platformer parody? ✓
- Time-warp puzzling? ✓
- Laboured metaphors? ✓
- Exclusive PS3 content? ✗

There's a cruel irony in the fact that PS3 owners have had to wait for so long to see this time-bending, small-budget, big-ideas puzzler on PSN. One of the most imaginative download only games ever created, *Braid* proves continually inventive, perplexing, beautiful and clever. So very clever that perhaps the game's only flaw is its desperation to let you know just how smart it is.

Braid's brand of platforming will be instantly accessible to anyone who's hopped, skipped and jumped through Mario's Mushroom Kingdom, and the smart time-twisting mechanics that feed into it is done at a pace that never quite overwhelms. You find yourself in lush worlds filled with the familiar obstacles of platformers past – enemies with heads that need jumping on, carnivorous plants, spike pits and a kidnapped princess who's always in another castle.

In contrast to Mario, getting from one side of a level to another in *Braid* is rarely a great feat, largely because every misstep can be corrected by pressing a button to rewind time.

Unlike, say, *Prince Of Persia: The Sands Of Time*, there's no limit on the extent to which time can be reversed, allowing you to turn back the clock all the way to the very second you stepped into the level. It makes the usual platforming problems a bit of a cinch – the real challenge comes in collecting jigsaw pieces along the way. Each is separated from you by a conundrum, the unlocking of which requires you to master the manipulation of time in increasingly tortuous ways. Sure, you can finish a stage, but mastering it takes some real dedication.

Castle crashers At the end of each level our hero, Tim, is thwarted in his attempt to save the princess. It's funny at first, but later on it takes a darker, more tragic turn. Just one of *Braid*'s clever little tricks.

PSM3 BUY IT

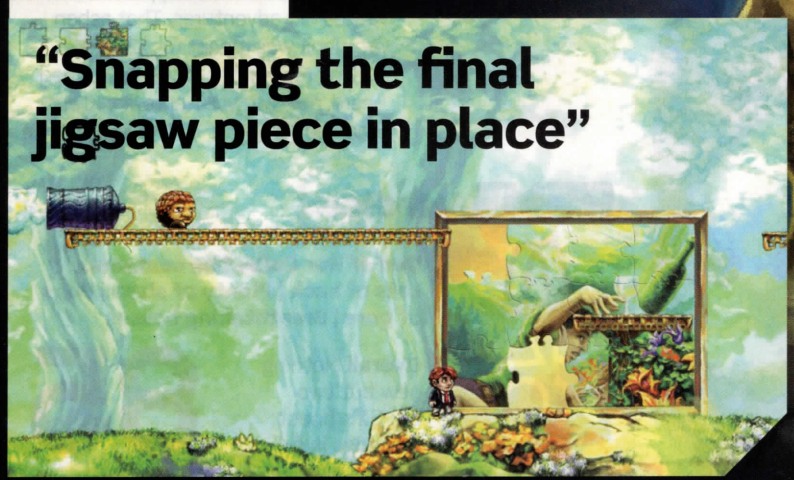
Twists in time

There are levels where time advances as you walk from left to right, and spins back with every step in the other direction. Later, placeable time wells slow everything around them, increasing with proximity, and every rewind creates a doppelgänger who plays out your preceding (or is that proceeding?) actions, leading to solutions where you have to jump on your own head to reach another platform.

Every zone has a trick that's subtly introduced

Fave Feature

"Snapping the final jigsaw piece in place"



Braid

"You need to master the manipulation of time in increasingly tortuous ways"

Simple is beautiful Despite the old-school inspirations, *Braid*'s levels are beautifully drawn and each provides its own unique challenge as you piece together the puzzle.

Platform specific

If you've already played *Braid* on another platform there's little need to revisit it here. Unlike the PC version, there are no extra features for PS3. Boooo!

and then tied into knots and wrung of its potential. Most are supremely elegant and have a crisp internal consistency – although the graphical simplicity sometimes fudges the complexities of trying to put a key into a lock from the future in the past. Otherwise, *Braid* is an aesthetic masterclass – an antidote to the knowingly lo-fi graphics in most other retro-inspired games. The music, too, as it slides backwards and forwards with your contortions of time, is powerful stuff.

Past tense

Then there's the narrative, should you wish to sample it. It's tucked away as an optional extra in text boxes that pop up when you walk across them. It's rather overwrought – an intentionally obscure, fussily impressionistic story of memory and obsession. It's clever, but in an ostentatious way, trying too hard to be difficult, like a sixth form James Joyce medley. Still, whatever narrative exists is largely disjointed from the game itself, its themes only really condensing in the action of the last level – a brilliant moment in which notions of memory and perspective crash together with the game's time-bending mechanics.

With or without the wordy appendage, *Braid* is close to genius. Though informed by platforming convention, it's a game of greater ambitions. Booting *Mario* down the rabbit hole and then firing him beyond the infinite, PSN welcomes a true classic – about time. **Martin Davies**

PSM3 Verdict

***Braid* contains...**

Time rewind | Ingenious puzzles
Indie cool | Aspirations to being art

Overall Complex and beautiful, one of the best puzzle games of all time.

92

Format PS3 | **Price** £40 | **Release** January 15
Pub Capcom | **Dev** Airtight Games
Multi-player None | **Trophies** 48

Dark Void

A throwaway action game with interesting touches...

This is Will. Mankind's future rests on his shoulders. He's a berk.

Boy meets girl. Girl leaves boy. Boy and girl are reunited minutes before crashing a plane in the Bermuda Triangle and passing through a void into a shadowy underworld containing reptilian creatures intent on starting World War 2. It could happen. And if Brad Pitt has his way it will happen in the form of a movie, with the man himself even mooted to play the lead role.

Until then, it's up to you to step into the frayed flying jacket of the hapless Will, inadvertently charged with saving the world when all he really wants to do is find out why his missus walked out and effect a reconciliation. For the latter he's armed with some trite dialogue, whereas for the all-important world-saving he's strapped into some experimental technology in the shape of a rudimentary jetpack, and can also pilot aircraft, control AA guns, or even hijack enemy flying saucers via a repetitive series of quick-time events.

Cover me

Much of the game's development team previously worked on *Crimson Skies*, and initially it's hard to establish what feels more tacked on, the flying sections or the entire rest of the game, which largely consists of hiding behind conveniently placed cover and shooting (or grappling) some mainly stupid enemies, occasionally with the aid of AI-controlled allies. In most of the on-foot sections you still have your jetpack, enabling you to take the battle to the air, or simply hover up to a better vantage point. Switching between the gameplay styles keeps it vaguely interesting, although some clichéd boss battles and unfair checkpoints do begin to grate.

It all shifts along at a fair old pace, with some dramatic music (from the Battlestar Galactica composers) adding incongruous gravitas to the B-movie Boy's Own schlock. Thematically, it's a welcome break from the norm - there aren't many games where you fly around inside a monster's belly shooting bile ducts - but ultimately you'll tear through it over a weekend and never look at it again. Ideal rental fodder then, but £40 is asking a bit much. **Steve Hill**

I robot They might look scary but they're basically vulnerable slugs in shiny spacesuits.

Up the down escalator

Dark Void's gimmick is the so-called verticality. Essentially this involves dropping down (or hovering up) a series of ledges by pressing the ◎ button when prompted. Mildly disorientating, it's like being trapped in an Escher work.

PSM3 Verdict

***Dark Void* contains...**
Average shooting | Passable flying
Contrived verticality | Risible story

Overall A solid but unimaginative shooter, with poor characters.

68

START CATCHING UP
ON TV YOU'VE MISSED.
The Game Is Just The Start
Start catching up on the latest programmes with BBC iPlayer on PS3. Start making sure you never miss anything again. Start getting more from your games console.
The new PS3 out now.
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Format PS3 | **Price** £50 | **Release** Out now
Pub THQ | **Dev** Vigil
Multi-player None | **Trophies** 43

Making a comeback The crossblade can be aimed at multiple targets and will always return straight to you. It's good for puzzle-solving, but a touch fiddly for fighting.

Darksiders

The generic love-child of *Zelda* and *God Of War*

KNOW IT NOW

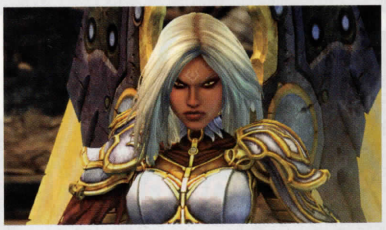
- **Wears inspirations on its sleeve?** ☑
- **Enjoyable marriage of two genres?** ☑
- **Generic angry man-character?** ☑
- **Full of innovative new ideas?** ☒

When you idolise someone so much that you begin to dress, move and act exactly like them, how do you have a personality of your own? That's *Darksiders*' dilemma. Half the time it's like playing *God Of War*. For the rest of the game, *Darksiders* apes *Legend of Zelda*, with dungeons to explore and puzzles to solve. The only thing missing is the green tunic. And while you might think that fusing such distinct games would be enough to give *Darksiders* its own character, it isn't.

Forget the story – it's very much end-of-the-world-style nonsense, and just an excuse to let War (of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse) hit loads of demons with a big sword. There are lots of weapons, and if you go on a murderous enough rampage your wrath bar will fill and you can adopt War's 'chaos form' for a while. Here, War increases in size and is engulfed in flame, allowing you to run amok for 30 seconds or so. Sound familiar? Yes, it's like *GOW*'s Rage of the Gods mode, of course. But this is far from the only similarity to Kratos' adventures.

In fact, you can't move without spotting something inspired by *GOW* – kill a demon, and its soul is absorbed into War, allowing him to level-up later. There are colour-coded chests, offering souls that increase health or add to War's wrath bar. Kratos has the Blades of Chaos, War has his sword – The Chaoseater. Of course, none of this would be a problem were *Darksiders*' combat as fluid, responsive or *satisfying* as *GOW*'s but, while it's decent enough, fighting in this game is clunky and far too reliant on mashing ⓑ. It's like playing a version of *GOW* created in a parallel

Adam's grapple The grappling hook lets you reach areas of the game you couldn't previously.



Ladies fight Ola here is just one of many who try to block War's path. And then fail.

Combat's entertainment The combat is solid and fun, but lacks that all-important spark.

universe, one where it hasn't had quite the same level of talent – and cash – thrown at it. War himself, by the way, is a disappointment. He's just like all the other pissed-off 'anti-heroes' that rule gaming, from Cole of *inFamous* to that Jet Brody bloke from *Fracture*. The only thing differentiating him from them is the chunky armour and the hoodie. War, being the embodiment of war, should radiate fury and charisma but here, he's got less personality than plate of floppy lettuce.

Big guy Meet the Destroyer. You run into this guy twice. He's *a lot* bigger than you.

A link to the past

So to the *Zelda*-style dungeon bits. These require a good deal of thought, and you're often left scratching your head and wondering how the hell you're going to reach the other side of this chasm, or hit that switch a million miles away. But these parts are *so* inspired by *Zelda* it's untrue. For instance, you get a new weapon shortly into each 'dungeon', and you'll need to master it to progress. Just like in *Zelda*. The first one, the Crossblade, is a giant shuriken – but one that comes straight back to you. Like *Zelda*'s boomerang. And you'll use it to hit multiple enemies or switches at once. Like in *Zelda*. There are even bombs growing out of leafy pods on the ground. Like in *Zelda*. And there's always a big boss battle after each dungeon. Like in *Zelda*. Actually, these are pretty impressive, from giant she-bat Tiamat to screeching multi-legged demon The Griever, and are certainly among the game's high points. Later on, you'll be able to get your horse, Ruin, and ride him across the game's map. Like in *Shadow Of The Colossus*. Oh, and *Zelda*. Sadly, *Darksiders* does none of these things anywhere near as well as *Zelda* – the puzzles aren't as in-depth, the locations are less inspiring (a flooded subway station? *Really*?) and the sense of awe and discovery pales in comparison to Link's adventures.

Watch out
The Watcher, played by Mark Hamill, is assigned by the Charred Council – basically, War's bosses – to keep an eye on you. He's a bit unpleasant, but gives you some handy hints...

The shoulders of giants

Darksiders' similarities to *Zelda* and *God Of War* certainly aren't a bad thing – there are far worse games to be inspired by – but the best titles transcend their inspirations, and this is something *Darksiders* fails to do. *God Of War* could loosely be described as *Devil May Cry* in ancient Greece, but you never notice when you're playing it. When a game is worse than its source material, this feels jarring. *Resi 5* was, understandably, almost a carbon copy of *Resi 4*, but it lacked the magic and freshness of its predecessor.

And that's *Darksiders*' problem. Held on its own merits, it's enjoyable, but there are better games out there. Even now, at the start of 2010 there are two new, very similar action titles – *Bayonetta* and *Dante's Inferno* – that pack more of a punch and leave this game in the shade. **David Cook**

Fave Feature

PSM3 Verdict

Darksiders contains...
Bits of *Zelda* | Bits of *God Of War*
A hoodie hero | Lots of demons

Overall Fun, but *Darksiders* fails to carve out an original identity of its own.

77

Format PS3 | **Price** £100 | **Release** Out Now
Pub Activision | **Dev** Robomodo
Multi-player 1-8 (hot seat) | **Trophies** 27

Tony Hawk: RIDE

Promising board peripheral betrayed by boring game

Lara, Spyro, Crash. All fallen PlayStation icons, and – on this trajectory – Tony Hawk's spiralling toward them. Fast. *RIDE* is expensive, sanitised, restrictive and little fun – in other words, everything real-life skating, with its scuzzy, democratic, DIY roots, shouldn't be – faux-extreme corporate culture at its self-parodying worst.

RIDE's big hook is the skateboard peripheral. A fairly tidy motion and pressure sensitive plank of plastic, it's easily the game's best feature – but that isn't saying much.

Visuals are reminiscent of a drab PS2 title. Washed – out colours meet blurry, bland textures. It's supposed to look cartoony, casual and accessible but it just feels crude.

Board to tears

The game, poetically, is a bit of a grind. The career spans various locations, each with a few levels to beat. Complete one Trick, Speed and Challenge Run, get enough points to unlock the next lot and move on. Not before you've watched the instructional video from a famous skater with the lip-syncing embarrassingly out of time. It's repetitive and, worse, dull.

The board's the only redeeming feature. Run your foot past its infra-red sensor to push. Then rotate it sideways or pop it back on the tail to combine tricks. Leaning, tilting, or putting a hand over a sensor for a 'grab' provide a neat array of options. It's pleasingly sturdy and responsive to use and, when you're in the middle of a combo-stuffed trick run, *RIDE* starts to feel how we'd imagined it – innovative and fun.

Skating destroyed

It's a shame then, that the levels are so dire. You'd expect the likes of L.A. and Venice to prove vast skating expanses, but they feel small and cramped. In particular, the challenges are intensely frustrating. One level has you literally jumping through hoops, pulling ollies and performing flip tricks. All in set locations, in a certain order, with any deviation equalling failure. The board is good, but not precise enough to pull this off.

Trick Run mode is decent – perform free-form tricks and combos for points, like the original games. Poor level design, though, soon hinders the experience. Speed Runs, meanwhile, strangely discourage tricks, going against the series' core appeal.

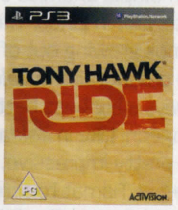
To make matters worse, even the board – the game's potential saving grace – is unreliable. Ours was consistently disconnecting and refusing to calibrate – unexpected problems for such a pricey peripheral. Then there's the horribly intrusive advertising, like the 'T-Mobile Sidekick Trophy'. For a series ostensibly rooted in street culture, this feels shamelessly corporate.

Skate 2's more authentic for skaters, and – above all – more intuitive, and rewarding, for gamers. *RIDE's* casual, muddled, approach will frustrate all but the absurdly rich or highly undemanding. **Alex Evans**

Half-pipe haven The half-pipes are best for massive combos.

Control Yourself There's three difficulty settings. 'Casual' takes care of direction control, 'Hardcore' leaves everything to you and 'Confident' is a fudged mix of the two.

PSM3 Verdict



***Tony Hawk: RIDE* contains...**
Potential embarrassment | Attitude
Predictably big tricks | Poor visuals

Overall Ugly, buggy and mostly boring to play. A decent peripheral wasted.

41

Dead Skates It's sad to see such a classic, well-respected series botched so brutally.

Online Competition

Join My Live Season

Win tickets to the FA Cup final with *FIFA 10*'s interactive leagues

It's the new year. And, at the risk of sounding blunt, what better way to round off a drunken New Year party than scoring with... a, er, critically-lauded football video game? Er, yes, but in all seriousness, we'd like to offer you the chance to win a new game, plus the chance to scoop tickets to the FA Cup final. What do you need to do to take part? Score a good – or lucky – goal in *FIFA 10*. Let us explain...

As part of EA Sports and GamesRadar's ongoing My Live Season competition, we're giving away a game every week to whoever scores the best goal of the Premier League weekend.

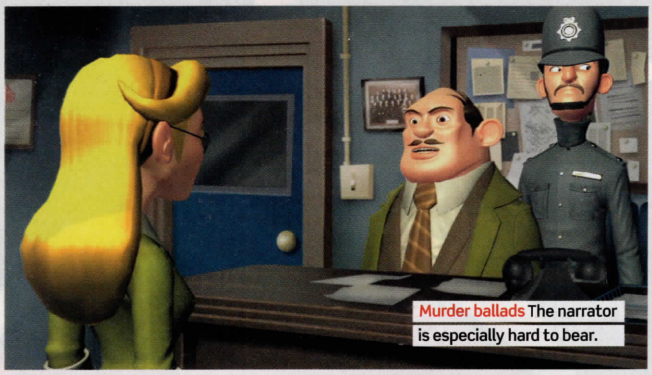
Each week we select a match from the upcoming weekend's fixtures. To be in with a chance of winning, all you have to do is play the game we've selected, on My Live Season, score a fantastic goal, and show it to us. Head to www.gamesradar.com/myliveseason for full details.

If we think your goal is the best of that week's bunch, you'll win an EA game of your choice. And at the end of the season we'll choose one overall winner who'll receive tickets for the FA Cup Final at Wembley.

FIFA 10
MY LIVE SEASON
gamesradar.com

Enter our My Live Season Competition now at
www.gamesradar.com/myliveseason

EA SPORTS



Murder ballads The narrator is especially hard to bear.

Relentless | PS3 | Out now

Blue Toad Murder Files: The Mysteries of Little Riddle

A gaming murder most horrid

Buzz devs Relentless swap 'who-knows-it' for 'whodunnit' in these episodic adventures which come in the mould of ITV's Sunday evening murder mysteries. You tune in, listen to the yarn and solve puzzles to further the tale. It's all a bit Die Hard With A Vengeance meets Midsomer Murders.

The puzzles are certainly easier than Jeremy Irons'. Trying to keep a swift pace, Relentless pitch their conundrums – anagrams, jigsaws, observational – on the overly gentle side. Why else do we play puzzle games but to activate the grey matter numbed by playing as bald space marines? *Blue Toad* is almost too polite to trouble you, and in the four-player competitive mode, there's a fair chance of complete deadlock.

A stingy 12 puzzles per episode (for a steep £10) leaves most of the time for story. But where good detective shows are anchored with a charismatic private dick – Columbo, Morse, erm, Bergerac? – *Blue Toad* is lorded over by a criminally unfunny narrator. Aiming for Stephen Fry verbosity, it comes across Christopher Biggins camp. Another episode of this idiot will drive us to murder.

Throwaway in every regard, the only true victim is your brain, murdered by boredom. The solution? it was Relentless, on PS3, with the *Blue Toad Murder files*. **Matt Castle**

PSM3 Verdict

Overpriced, over-acted and over too quick. More *Buzz!* beckons...

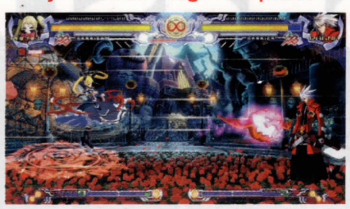
40

Buzz off It at least looks nice thanks to the involvement of *Buzz!* developers Relentless.

Arc System Works | PS3 | February

BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger

Guilty Gear team delights 2D purists



Arc System Works' confidence and know-how is obvious after playing *BlazBlue* for just a few minutes. Winning your first bout with a quick, dramatic finish is a great feeling, and although you have to work for it, victory never feels unfairly out of reach, like it can do in other hardcore scrappers.

Even so, the Story Mode provides a significant challenge. Playing through it establishes the relationships between this new cast of characters, though their stories will only really be palatable if you've been weaned on anime.

Mastering things such as double-jumps, dash-back steps and rapid cancels is just as important as learning how to pull off the spectacular combos. *BlazBlue*'s daunting intricacies yield huge rewards. You'll forget every failed combo once you manage a hand-mangling Astral Finisher, filling the screen with colours and finishing your foe instantly. The online ranking system and lag-free play tops *Street Fighter IV* too. A superb offering. **Owen Hill**

85

Sony | PS3 | Out now

PixelJunk Shooter

Subterranean 2D science action

In a faraway galaxy some miners have unwittingly harvested energy from the wrong planet. The first attempt at a narrative in a *PixelJunk* game may be clichéd, but underneath it lies a cleverly-crafted physics based puzzler – not the shooter game the title suggests.

PSM3 BUY IT

To rescue the miners, you pit the various elemental properties present in the three areas (lava cave, ice cavern, factory) against each other. For example, a well-aimed rocket could release a cascade of lava down onto your ice blockade, melting it in one graceful movement. The areas are craftily constructed and require a mix of strategic planning, quick thinking, but regrettably, some trial and error. *Shooter* looks gorgeous and is great in local co-op; the flow of the elements is satisfying and truly elegant. Another superb PSN offering from the Pixeljunk team. **Sean O'Connor**

89

Sony Computer Entertainment | PS3 | Out now

Gravity Crash

An vector-style arcade shooter

PSM3 BUY IT

Gravity Crash entrusts you with objectives including saving allies, collecting gems and destroying enemy refineries. It's standard fare, but what sets it apart is the focus on gravity that forces your ship into the earth should you boost a second too late. The mechanics are refined, but the extras are often an unwelcome hindrance. Hovering is an art in itself – never mind worrying about enemy missiles, fuel loss and cave walls. Thankfully there are no 'Game Overs': when your lives are used up, you can continue with your score reset to zero. This removes frustration, without alienating hardcore gamers.

There's an accessible map editor and well-made levels can be produced quickly and shared over PSN, which extends the game's longevity – think *LBP*. There's already a lot of good stuff on there too – well crafted levels that manage to feel different to the 'official' offerings. **Sean O'Connor**

81

Activision | PS3 | Out now

Call of Duty Classic

Time to re-enlist for this vintage FPS

Yes, we love capping terrorists with an M16 in a contemporary setting. But we still have a soft spot for this classic shooter that kick started the peerless FPS franchise. Simply put, the original *COD* remains one of the best WWII games ever made.

This is where Infinity Ward learned all their crowd-pleasing tricks. Pitch perfect pacing that sees you investigate a ghostly French Village one moment before storming Stalingrad with dozens of Russian conscripts the next. It has streamlined controls that make nailing Nazis a constant fist-punching pleasure and disquieting set pieces, like charging Red Square with nothing but an ammo clip. It might be six years old, but this is still more intense than most full-fat PS3 shooters.

PSM3 BUY IT

Alright, so the WWII weaponry feels underpowered after *MW2*. But some inventive Trophies, clean looks and an emotional campaign make this a great purchase at £12. **Dave Meikleham**

83

Sony | PS2 | Out now

Jak and Daxter: The Lost Frontier

Naughty Dog's old stray

This elf-eared bloke and his orange 'ottsel' pal were once PS2's top platformers. Times change, but *TLF* is no lost cause. It feels cheap, but mostly cheerful. Jak's magical Eco powers, like slowing time and teleportation, break up fun but repetitive shooting sections and are pretty well implemented.

There are tons of collectibles and upgrades to extend the eight hour length. *Ratchet & Clank*-style plane dogfights are a decent addition, if a tad long, though new 'dark Daxter' – when Jak transforms into his evil, mega-powerful alter ego – sections aren't particularly great to play through. Platform fans will find much to enjoy here, but it all feels low-budget. The story ignores the previous trilogy though – Jak's voice is different, for example. And visually, it looks decent, but not great.

63

Alex Evans

Rebellion | PS3 | Out now

Rogue Warrior

Not in good taste...

If you asked potty mouth Dick Marcinko to describe Rogue Warrior in a single phrase then, judging by the game, he'd say "this is a motherf*ckin' piece of sh*t." Doesn't mince words, our Dick, who's apparently a real person, though he does enjoy mincing the guts of anyone who doesn't vote Reagan of a Sunday. He's nice like that.

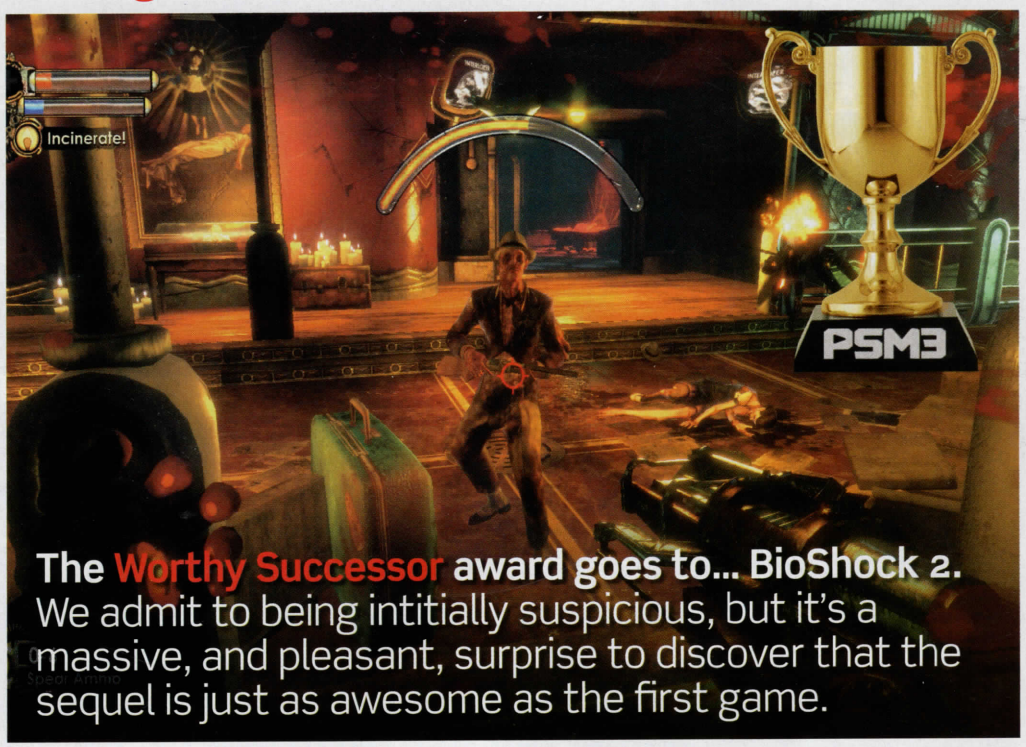
So: this is the video game about a headcase, and only a headcase would buy it. It's an FPS from ten years ago in terms of design and visuals: the reticule goes where you want it to, and enemies fall over, but that's about as much as this gets right. Corridors, pop up dummies, samey guns, boring cutaway melees, that's your lot. It lasts two-and-a-half hours, which is something of a mercy if we're totally honest. There's plenty of commie-bashing, a lot of Chinese Russians, and all sorts of other nonsense from the darker ages of humanity, all garnished with a lot of swearing because swearing is adult. Total f*cking garbage, as the right honourable Dick would (probably) say.

26

Richard Stanton

PSM3 Awards

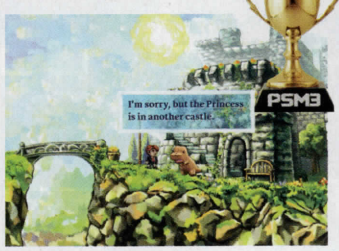
The highs (and lows) of this month's reviews



The Worthy Successor award goes to... BioShock 2.

We admit to being intitially suspicious, but it's a massive, and pleasant, surprise to discover that the sequel is just as awesome as the first game.

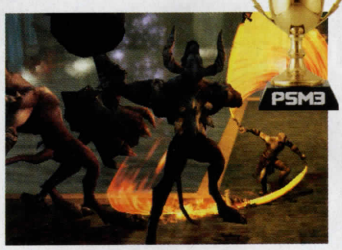
The "Man, finally!" award goes to...



Braid

This now-legendary puzzler has been on Xbox and PC for ages, but, finally, PS3 gets a taste. One of the best examples of what download-only games can offer, and one of the best games on the PlayStation Network.

The Exciting Prospect award goes to...

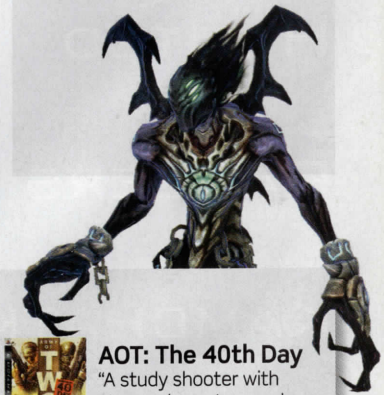


God Of War Collection

Could this be a sign that more classic games will be returning in High Definition? There's a list as long as all of our arms combined of PS2 games we'd love to see reimagined in glorious 720P. Team Ico, we're looking at you.

Hi-Score Table

BioShock 2	p72 93%
Braid	p84 92%
PixelJunk Shooter	p92 89%
GOW Collection	p80 85%
BlazBlue	p92 85%
COD Classic	p92 83%
Gravity Crash	p92 81%
Darksiders	p88 77%
Dark Void	p86 68%
Jak: The Lost Frontier	p93 63%
Tony Hawk RIDE	p90 41%
Blue Toad Murder Files	p92 40%
Rogue Warrior	p93 26%



PSM3 Recommends

The best games from the last few months

Bayonetta

"Sexy, epic and wonderfully ridiculous. A slick action game that's wiser than its forebears, but never cynically so. And, simply, it's irresistably fun to play. *Bayonetta* is all about *pleasure*."

PSM3 rating 90% - Issue 122

Assassin's Creed 2

"Superb action and a smart, well-rounded story. A perfect sequel. An experience that lasts and entertains for three times longer than most blockbuster games. Clever, clever stuff."

PSM3 rating 94% - Issue 121

AOT: The 40th Day

"A study shooter with strong characters and a great morality system. Not as polished as *Uncharted 2* but a worthy, and often surprising, alternative to it. Quality co-op action with challenging moral moments."

PSM3 rating 85% - Issue 122

MODERN VLADIMIR MAKAROV LIEUTENANT GE

PRIVATE FIRST CLASS JOSEPH ALLEN GRE

GULAG IMRAN ZAKHAEV DESERT MIDDLE EA

PIT FOLEY BASE MISSILE AFGHANISTAN H

WAR 2'S INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION W

DELTA SPEC OPS FALLOUT POLITICS KILL

RIO DE JANEIRO SERGEANT GARY "ROACH

PRIVATE JAMES RAMIREZ GUERRILLA AIRP

OSCAR MIKE PLOT PRISONER #627 RUSSIA

HUNTED SIBERIA CAPTAIN 'SOAP' MACTAV

RANGERS TASK FORCE 141 AIRCRAFT BON

KAMCHATKA PENINSULA BOAT CHASE VI

PLUS WHAT IT MEANS FOR MODERN WARFARE 3

NERAL SHEPHERD ALPHA AC-130 WARHEAD

NADE RADAR ULTRANATIONALISTS BRAVO

AST CHARLIE FAVELA WARFARE GHOST M4

IDEOUT HVI ALEXEI BORODIN WASHINGTON

HISKEY HOTEL WAYPOINT BETRAYAL NIKOLAI

NG JUGGERNAUT KRIEGLER ACS MODULE

" SANDERSON CONFUSING EXODUS CIA

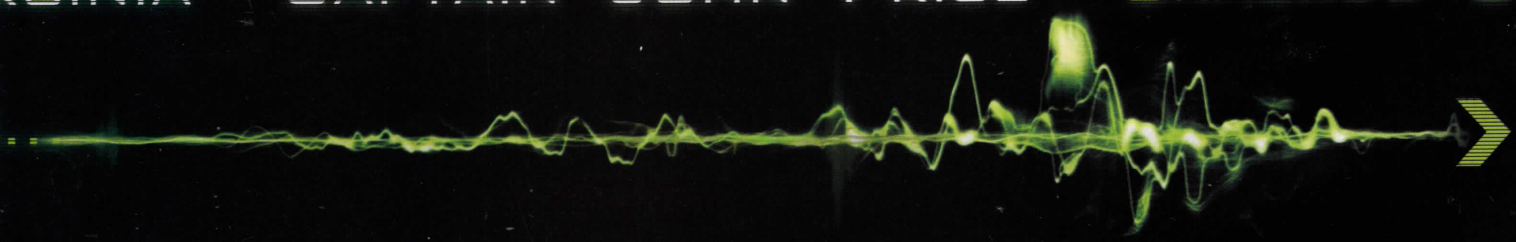
ORT INTERNATIONAL ASSASSINATION EMP

REBELS NIGHT VISION GOGGLES MASSACRE

SH SUSPENSION INFINITY WARD US ARMY

IYARDS P-90 LAUNCH CODES LOYALISTS

RGINIA CAPTAIN JOHN PRICE CRACKED



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What's an ACS Module?

ACS stands for Attack Characterisation System. It's a surveillance device that calculates the risk of one country attacking another. In *Modern Warfare 2*, one belonging to the Americans 'goes missing' and is located in a Russian airbase. Captain 'Soap' MacTavish and Gary 'Roach' Sanderson are sent to recover the lost unit in 'Cliffhanger', but the mission is compromised and the pair are forced to flee with the unit under heavy attack – but it turns out the Russians had already cracked it.

This means that the Russian invasion of America – sparked by the events of 'No Russian' – goes undetected, and paratroopers are able to evade radar and land inside Washington, seizing control.

Space saver With the ACS, satellites can track hostile enemy movements.

Image library | Upload | Magnify | Enhance

Why is the data I had to defend in 'Loose Ends' so important to Shepherd?

This mission sees you downloading data from a computer in Makarov's safehouse, while hundreds of Ultranationalist soldiers swarm towards you. The reason this data is so sought after is because it may pinpoint Makarov's hiding place.

Shepherd wants it so he can kill him, reducing the risk of his grand scheme being revealed. However, Task Force 141 think he wants it for more noble reasons – to bring him to justice. But just as you escape with the data, Shepherd betrays you, shooting Roach and Ghost fatally. If Ghost really *is* Gaz, he's probably the unluckiest soldier in the world.

Image library | Upload | Magnify | Enhance

Is Ghost Gaz from Call of Duty 4?

Gaz, voiced by British actor Craig Fairbrass, was an SAS Special Forces operator who worked with Captain John Price and 'Soap' MacTavish during the events of *COD4*.

At the end of the game Gaz is seemingly executed by a Desert Eagle pistol, fired by one of Imran Zakhaev's bodyguards. In *Modern Warfare 2*, Sergeant 'Ghost' Riley – whose face is always obscured by a balaclava with a skull print – is also voiced by Fairbrass, with the same distinct London accent. Could it be that Gaz survived *COD4* and now obscures his scarred face with the mask? Gaz's surname was never revealed in *COD4*, so it could be Riley, and it seems odd that IW would hire the same voice actor to play two different characters.

All evidence points to the two characters being the same person. On a more obvious tip, he's called *Ghost*, and the character represents a common thread between the games; a mentor to your rookie – not an omnipotent, physical constant like Price.

Masked hero Could Gaz be hiding a scarred face under that natty balaclava? Or is it someone else entirely? It's a mystery.

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Source: Brazil informant
File: favela_rebels.wav

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Why is the airport in 'No Russian' called Zakhaev International?' wasn't he the villain in COD4?

Yes, despite Price and his squad's best efforts in *COD4*, the Ultranationalists – revolutionaries who want to take Russia back to the days of the Soviet Union – managed to seize control of the country and defeat the Loyalists.

Vladimir Makarov, the series' newest villain, used Zakhaev's death as propaganda to win over the populace, proclaiming him a martyr for 'Mother Russia'. So that's why the airport is named after him, and why Russia were so willing to invade America after identifying CIA operative Joseph Allen's body.

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Who is Nikolai, the helicopter pilot? He seems to be a friend of Price and Soap...

That's because in the *COD4* mission 'Blackout', Soap and Price rescued Nikolai from the clutches of the Ultranationalists in the Caucasus Mountains. He was the informant who tipped the SAS off to the location of the nuke aboard the Estonian ship in 'Crew Expendable', and in return the order was given to rescue him by the British government. In *MW2* he's a pilot for Task Force 141.

Shining armour Nikolai has saved Price and co. countless times across two *Modern Warfare* games now. He's a top bloke.

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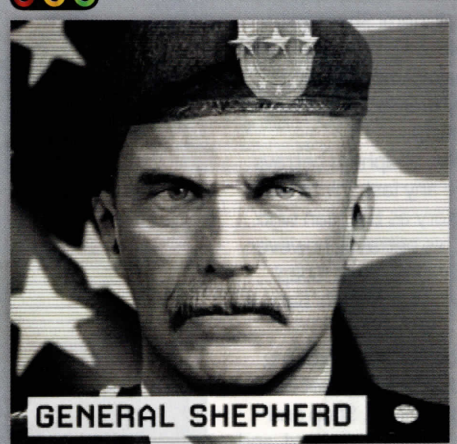
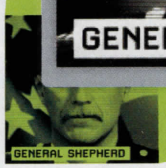
Why did Shepherd become a bad guy?

Before trying to kill Soap, General Shepherd reveals, "Five years ago, I lost 30,000 men in the blink of an eye. And the world just fuckin' watched. Tomorrow there will be no shortage of volunteers, no shortage of patriots. I know you understand".

Shepherd served as commander of the coalition forces in the Middle East in *COD4*, and we can only presume the '30,000' are those killed in *COD4*'s nuclear blast, including Sergeant Paul Jackson (who's death you experience in first-person).

The war suits Makarov, both financially (presumably for orchestrating the airport incident), and politically, since going to war with the US cements support for the Russian Ultranationalist state, who Makarov supports. The war – and in particular, the EMP blast – allows Shepherd to take absolute control of the US forces, and claim his government 'blank cheque'. In Shepherd's mind, it's an acceptable loss for restoring the US's military might and generating interest in joining the forces.





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Who is Kriegler I see his name all over the place; on shipping containers, on a blimp in the 'Suspension' Spec Ops mission...

One of the most mysterious elements of the Modern Warfare universe is the corporation – and its likely figurehead – Kriegler. PC modders found unused audio files for the mission 'Mile High Club' in *COD4*, one of which has Gaz saying, with regards to the hostage you have to save, "Remember, the objective is to capture Kriegler, I repeat, capture Kriegler, alive. He's no good to us dead."

And in the mission Crew Expendable 'Kriegler' is written in Chinese characters on the containers on the deck of the ship. We also see it in English on a number of multi-player maps in *Modern Warfare 2*, and in the 'Suspension' Spec Ops mission on a prominent blimp. Whoever Kriegler is, he's clearly of some importance. But why all references to him were removed from 'Mile High Club', we'll never know.

So Makarov's still at large?

Yes, even though Shepherd wanted to tie up loose ends and kill him – until Price gets involved, and sort-of sides with Makarov, in the whole 'my enemy's enemy is my friend' bit. We think Makarov will be back to 'villain' duties in *MW3*, just so you can get 'revenge', in Hollywood-style for the airport atrocity – though knowing IW, it won't be as black and white as that. *MW2* might end on a slightly flat note, with no resolution for some key issues, but think of it like the 'dark' second film in a trilogy, like Empire Strikes Back or Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers.

Bad to the bone Makarov during the terror attack on Zakhaev International Airport, Russia.

So how did Makarov know that Allen was working with the CIA?

Reading between the lines suggests that General Shepherd ratted him out. It was all part of his convoluted Bond villain–style plot to take control the US military and make America the mightiest nation on the planet, by secretly orchestrating the Russia/America war with the Ultranationalists.

But with his status as a war hero secured, Shepherd betrays his partners, both in an attempt to remove any last link to his treacherous actions, and to gain further glory as the man who brought down Makarov. Makarov survives his betrayal, however, and prepares to go into hiding, while Captain Price and 'Soap' MacTavish figure out Shepherd's agenda and assault his base in a cave system in Afghanistan.

Shepherd's reign of terror ends when Soap hurls a throwing knife at his head, but the war has been going so long that his death will have little effect on the ongoing conflict. Soap and Price become fugitives, declared war criminals by Shepherd, and that's where the game ends.

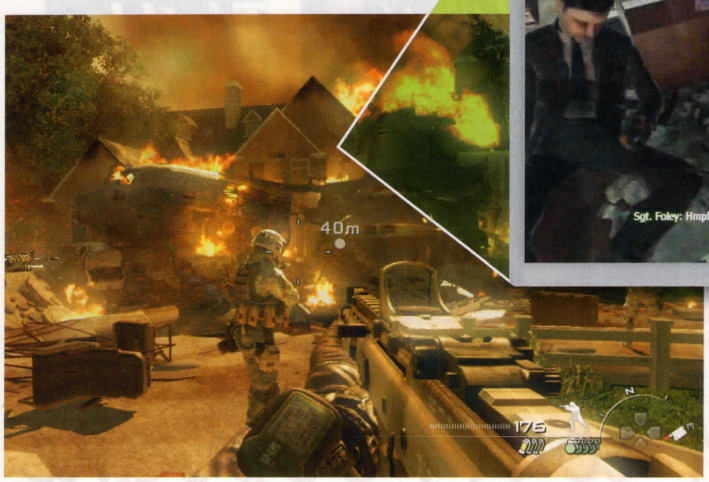
Why is the airport in 'No

In 'Exodus', who is the 'HVI'? And what was in his briefcase?

The Rangers are instructed by Shepherd to retrieve 'intel' from a panic room in a house. The intel is in a briefcase owned by an unnamed HVI (high value individual) who lives there. When Ramirez and the Rangers reach the address, they find the panic room raided and the HVI dead, but the intel is still there. A body nearby bears the same neck tattoo as Makarov's men in 'No Russian', which one of the Rangers comments on. This is the biggest plot hole in *Modern Warfare 2*. Why was one of Makarov's men there? Who was the HVI? What is the 'intel'?

It's never revealed. Before you enter the house Foley even asks Shepherd why the briefcase is so special, and he doesn't elaborate, simply stressing its importance again. If you zoom into the briefcase contents with a scope you can see two copies of *Modern Warfare 2* – which is clearly an in-joke from the art team.

Our theory is that the briefcase contents don't matter, nor does the HVI. It's a MacGuffin – a means to propel the plot forward, and give the Rangers something to do. Or, alternatively, perhaps Shepherd used the HVI as a distraction for Foley and Ramirez.



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What does this mean for Modern Warfare 3?

Speculation: start

Soap and Price: wanted
Now that Soap and Price are wanted as war criminals, thanks to Shepherd, will you, as Ramirez the Ranger, be sent to track them down and kill them? Seems like the kind of thing IW would do.

Hunting Makarov
Makarov essentially got away with the 'No Russian' massacre. He'll definitely return in *MW3*, so expect to get revenge – maybe as a family member of one of the slain Russian civilians.

Gaz/Ghost to return?
If he's Ghost, the tenacious soldier has 'died' twice now. So we'll be surprised if Craig Fairbrass isn't asked back to voice another mentor character. There's also a rumour he's getting his own game...

Kriegler
With so many references, we think IW might write this person/company into the script. Maybe as the real influence behind the series' villains? Or as a Blackwater-style private military company drawn into the conflict.

Image library Edit Upload

FFWD Rewind Scan Synchronise

financially (presumably for orchestrating the airport incident), since going to war wi

The bits we can't explain: massive plot holes that have no sensible answer

1) Makarov is an internationally known figure of menace, then, with a Russian military record. So when he confidently machineguns his way through the airport without even bothering to put on a mask, are we to believe that the Russian authorities weren't able to identify him easily from the security camera footage? It seems a bit far-fetched.

2) There's no way Price could have launched a missile from a Russian nuclear sub by himself. You need launch codes and special authorisation; you don't just hit 'fire'.

3) When they were planning the mission in Cliffhanger, why did they pick an extraction point on the far side of a massive canyon? Were they planning that exciting snowmobile getaway the whole time? What if they hadn't been able to find a vehicle capable of jumping the gorge?

4) If Zakhaev had become a hero to Mother Russia and the Russian public was embracing his Ultranationalist movement, why didn't Makarov have more political clout? Why did he have to ally himself with a shady US general and mass murder people who probably supported his cause?

5) Isn't anyone in the US government demanding to know why a 'CIA agent' participated in the murder of Russian civilians? Or is it easier to hand out blank cheques than ask tough questions?

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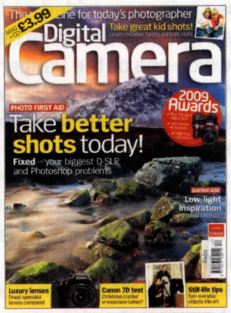

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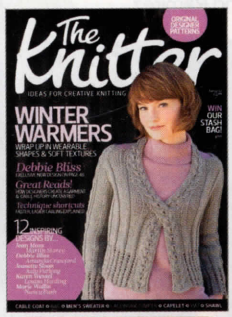

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Extended Play

Playing longer

Extended Play section

From *FIFA 10* to *Uncharted 2*... PS3's top online games revealed

Master PS2 crime caper, *Sly 3* revisited

Plus MORE

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Any thoughts about what you'd like to see in Extended Play? Mail them to psm3@futurenet.com, Tweet us at twitter.com/psm3_magazine or post on the forum @ psm3mag.com

The best guns on PlayStation

It started with an innocent embrace, as the *Space Invader's* turret spat it's first pixelated slug at an alien horde. Thirty years later, as millions of online gamers exhange endless streams of P90 fire in *Modern Warfare 2*, the relationship between guns and games is closer to a bear hug. Almost every PlayStation adventure is about confrontation and nothing ends an argument like a 9mm hollowpoint to the face. It doesn't matter whether you're wielding something believable like *Modern Warfare 2*'s M4 Carbine or the impossibly lethal RYNO V from *Ratchet & Clank*; the important thing is that when you pull the trigger, negotiations are coming to a close. Preferably with as much noise as possible.

KILLER 7

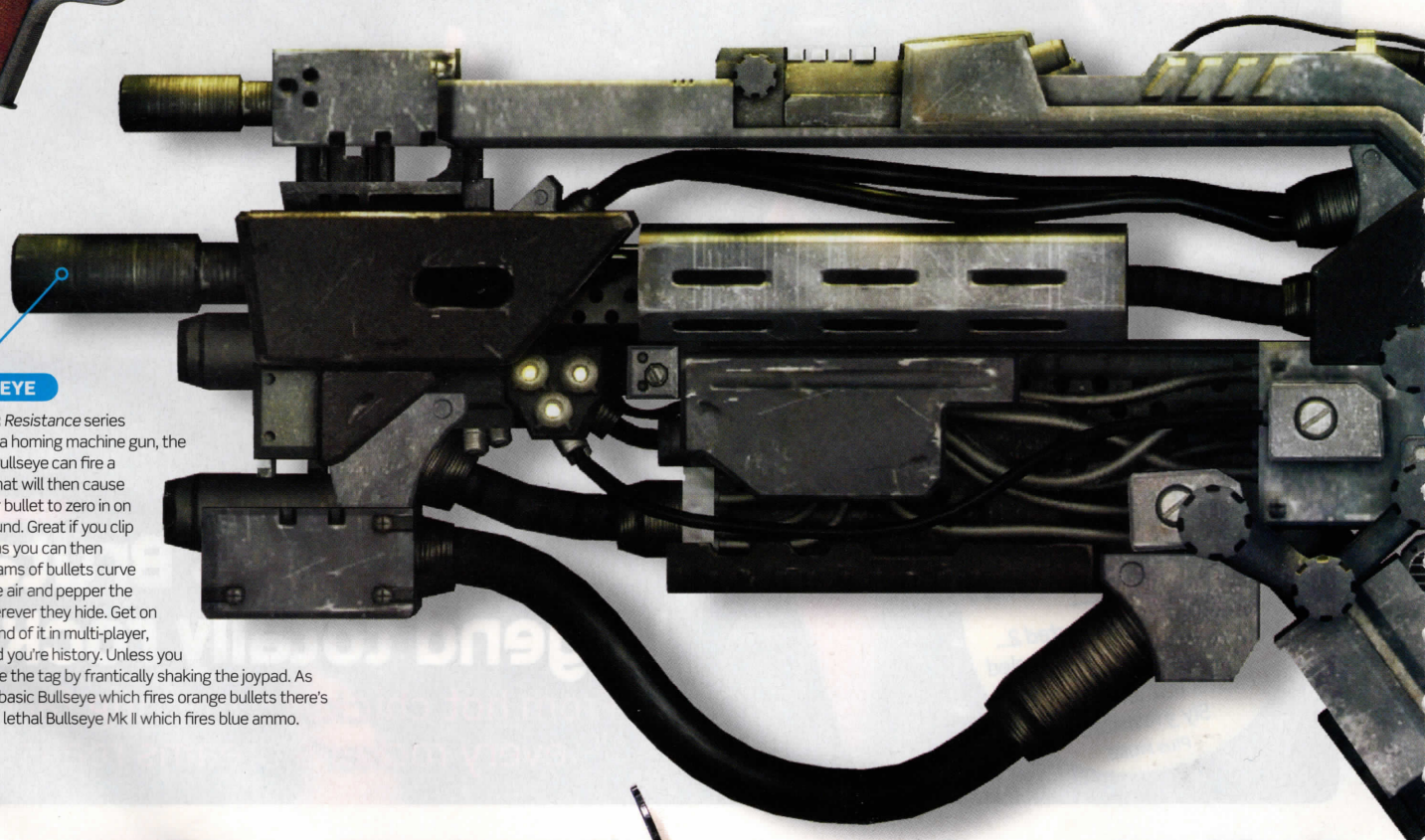
As fired in: *Killer 7* and *Resident Evil 4*

This semi-automatic pistol made appearances in both *Resident Evil 4* and the game *Killer 7* itself. In *Killer 7* it's a Colt M1911 with a scope (shown here) wielded by Kaede, one of the Smith assassins. The *Resi 4* version looks similar but is actually an AMT Hardballer Longslide with laser sight which is the handgun used by Arnie in the original Terminator, and the basis of Agent 47's Silverballers.

EBONY AND IVORY

As fired in: *Devil May Cry* series

If you're going demon killing then you'd best get tooled up. Dante's custom pistols are loosely based on M1911 .45 handguns. These ones however were heavily customised by master gunsmith Nell Goldstein and bare the inscription "For Tony Redgrave By .45 Art Warks". Tony Redgrave being one of Dante's aliases while 'warks' is an in-joke between the pair referring to Goldstein's misspelt shop sign. Ebony is designed for long distance targeting while Ivory is built for rapid fire. It's also a complete mirror image of its twin, with slide, ejection port and controls all left-handed.



BULLSEYE

As fired in: *Resistance* series

Essentially a homing machine gun, the Chimeran Bullseye can fire a 'tag' shot that will then cause every other bullet to zero in on the first round. Great if you clip a Chimera as you can then watch streams of bullets curve through the air and pepper the enemy wherever they hide. Get on the other end of it in multi-player, though, and you're history. Unless you can dislodge the tag by frantically shaking the joypad. As well as the basic Bullseye which fires orange bullets there's also a more lethal Bullseye Mk II which fires blue ammo.

W2000

As fired in: The *Hitman* series

Agent 47's trademark sniper rifle is actually a pricey collectors piece, so the assassination business must be paying well. It's based on the German Walther WA-2000. Only 176 were ever made, 11 of which were owned by Earl J. Sheehan, Jr, president of Walther Arms. A few years ago he offered one for sale. At $75, 000. The bullpup design places the firing mechanism and magazine behind the trigger, maximising the barrel length while keeping the rifle compact.

211-V PLASMA CUTTER

As fired in: *Dead Space 2*

Possibly the only gun on these pages with Black & Decker printed on the barrel. The 211-V is actually a mining tool used for cutting rocks. However, when engineer Isaac encounters undead alien necromorphs on the doomed USG Ishimura he finds its cutting abilities handy to prune the flailing limbs of the monsters pursuing him. It fires lethal slicing blasts of energy and you can rotate its barrel depending on whether you want to cut vertically or horizontally. Versatile.

RYNO V

As fired in: the *Ratchet & Clank* series

The RYNO (which stands for Rip You a New One) has appeared in all the Ratchet & Clank games. Described as 'the deadliest weapon in the known universe' it's an immensely powerful gun that's part rocket launcher, part machine gun, part shotgun and 100% death for anything not behind you when you pull the trigger. In *A Crack In Time* it even plays the 1812 Overture when you fire it. Classy.

HISTORY

BLUE ROSE

As fired in: *Devil May Cry 4*

Like the Killer 7, Nero's custom revolver also has a double life – the twin barrelled over and under handgun can fire two bullets at once and also originally made it's debt in the game Killer 7, as used by the assassin Dan Smith. It's a heavily adapted Smith & Wesson Model 500, the most powerful handgun currently in production.

M4A1 CARBINE

As fired in: *Metal Gear Solid 4*, the *Uncharted* series and *Modern Warfare 2*

A favourite of *Metal Gear*'s Snake, Nathan Drake from *Uncharted 2: Among Thieves* and a *Modern Warfare 2* essential, this is a full auto variant of the M4 Assault Rifle. Its popularity comes from the flexibility of the Special Operations Peculiar Modification, or SOPMOD, kit. This system lets you bolt just about anything you want on to the rifle, including extra grips, suppressors, grenade launchers, plus ACOG, reflex and laser sights. It's pretty much the only gun you'll ever need.

10 reasons why Brutal Legend totally rocks

Leon Hurley

Pub EA
Dev Double Fine
FYI PS3 | 2009 | PSM120 79%
Brutal Legend is a trip into a world where rock rules. It's a place where every creature, location, character and idea is inspired by heavy metal. As roadie Eddie Riggs you free humanity through missions and wonky RTS battles. The script is hilarious though.

TEN REASONS

1 YOU HAVE AN ARMY

As you free oppressed humans and rally them to your cause you build up a powerful force of misfits. Like the boulder-necked Headbangers and pyromaniac Fire Barons. You can order them to attack enemies or join up with them to unleash double-team attacks. If you've never run into battle with a hot gun-wielding girl on your shoulders then you've never lived.

Skin tone Nothing takes the fight out of an enemy like the flesh boiling from their bones.

3 IT'S GOT OSBOURNE*S*

As in all of them. Obviously Ozzy makes an appearance as the Guardian of Metal but if you explore around the Wraith Tree in an area you unlock towards the end of the game you'll find a familiar looking bat modelled on 80s Ozzy, with a very recognisable family. They've been turfed out of their cave by monsters and need your help. Try to enter the cave without agreeing to deal with the problem and dad bat will start insulting you using Ozzy song titles.

That bat Ozzy makes a second appearance as an antisocial bat.

2 YOU CAN MELT FACES

In the age of metal, music has power. In the real world Eddie's awesome guitar skills mean he can shred a mean solo – here, however, his axe licks melt the flesh off his enemies. So you're never more than a few notes from recreating that bit in Raiders Of The Lost Ark where God melts Nazis. Other solos can summon wild animals and chain opponents to anvils, but the ultimate riff summons a lethal flaming Zeppelin.

The big man Meet Kyle, one half of Jack Black's band Tenacious D. Well, more like three quarters.

4 TENACIOUS D REFORM

Clearly one of the greatest rock bands ever to grace the earth (cough). Jack Black's hard to miss as the lungs behind Eddie Riggs, but his band mate Kyle Gass isn't quite so obvious. He's actually the grenadier you find through one of the secondary missions. When you first meet him his confidence is shot and he can't hit anything. Guide his bombs, though, and you can blast enemies, get him back in the fight and unlock his selection of mortar-lobbing side quests.

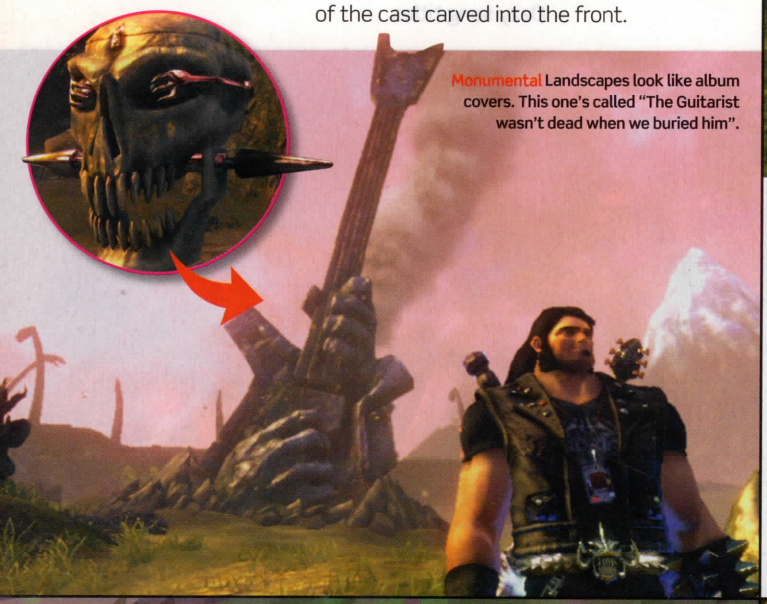
Hail to the queen The face and spear say, 'my eyes are up here.' We say, 'HOOONK!'

5 HOT CHICKS

Whatever your taste there's a girl here for you. Whether it's cute little rock chicks like Ophelia (who also doubles up as a vampy goth babe). The slightly MILFy but totally working the leather look Lita Halford, or the Razor Girls who tote guns built from the insides of Razorfire Boars. And, if you like them bitey, there's always Queen Rima and the Zaulia who wear, well, very little.

6 EPIC VIEWS

The world of Brutal Legend draws its inspiration from 70s and 80s metal album covers. So wherever you look there are incredible sights to be seen. Enormous rock obelisks formed from guitars, giant hands making the devil's horns and huge swords. Then there's the Screaming Wall, a cliff face made of amplifiers where microphone seagulls nest. You can even create your own views by changing the faces on Mount Rockmore, a mountain with massive effigies of the cast carved into the front.



Monumental Landscapes look like album covers. This one's called "The Guitarist wasn't dead when we buried him".

Go cat! It breaths fire and comes with a girl wearing a leather bikini. It's the best pet *ever*.

7 THE BEST WILDLIFE EVER

Who cares about the BBC's Life when you can have Panthers. Panthers that fire *lasers* from their eyes. The creatures in *Brutal Legend* are some of the most brilliantly messed up creations around. 40 foot chrome spiders, metal porcupines and the Tick Choppers – half motorbike, half... thing. The Metal Beasts, a sort of giant, fire breathing bear in KISS make up are actually on your side too.

8 THERE'S ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT

David Cross, who played Tobias Fünke in the show Arrested Development has a cameo. He's the victim tied to the Screamwagon, a vehicle used by the Tainted Coil faction in multi-player. Depending on how you boil, burn or stretch the poor soul strapped to the front it can buff your troop's abilities in different ways. Cross' screaming never gets old: "Oh great you won, now *will you get me the f*** out of here!*"

Motor-head Eddie's bike rocks hard. The only downside is that it's only around for one mission.

9 YOU GET TO BURN RUBBER

Providing you love chrome exhausts and a seriously disrespectful miles per gallon, then Eddie's garage kicks ass. First up is the Deuce, his custom hot rod complete with twin machine guns. Then there's the building-sized Tour Bus which Eddie uses to transport the whole of his Ironheade crew around. However the real winner is the chopper, a massive trike that's 90% engine and 10% "f**k you" metal attitude.

10

IT'S FULL OF (ROCK) STARS

Some of the biggest names in metal turn in vocal performances. Judas Priest singer Rob Halford plays both the enemy slavemaster General Lionwhyte and the Baron, leader of a friendly biker gang. Then there's Motörhead's Lemmy as the Kill Master and Lita Ford as the Amazonian Rima. And Ozzy of course as the Guardian of Metal.

Rob Halford as the Fire Baron

Missing link Ronnie James Dio was meant to play Doviculus but was dropped. Possibly because of a clash with Ozzy who he replaced in Black Sabbath.

Lemmy Kilmister as the Kill Master.

Ozzy Osbourne as the Guardian of Metal

Rob Halford (again) as General Lionwhyte

The ones we didn't pick...

The multi-player
The RTS battles are bad enough in the main game. Directing your army is woolly, unclear and messy against AI. Go online and battle real people and it's just a confusing dirge as you chase troops and try to workout what's going on. It's the game's weakest point and not worth a mention.

Tim Curry
Curry's turn as evil demon Doviculus is brilliant. But he's not particularly rock and roll *and* he features in just about every other video game these days.

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WALL OF SHOTS

Modern Warfare 2's 25 deadliest weapons

David Meikleham

GUN CLUB Maim men with these tools of destruction...

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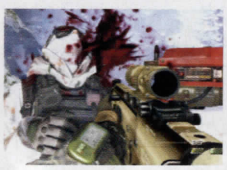
Pub Activision
Dev Infinity Ward
FYI PS3 | 2009 | PSM121 96%
Carrying on from where the first game left off, *Modern Warfare 2* builds on the original's success by adding new guns, online perks and a new Spec Ops co-op mode. The campaign is also brilliant, with more set-pieces than a Hollywood blockbuster.

Modern Warfare 2 is one of the greatest FPSs of the generation, both online and off. But to get the most out of it you're going to have to learn what guns are the best for tearing your enemies apart. The following man-murdering monsters should all help fire you to success.



Assault Rifle... SCAR-H

Best. Reload. Ever. While its rate of fire might be lower than some of the game's other rifles, this demands inclusion for the coolest reload action since a certain Austrian cyborg in T2. Used by Special Forces in real life, you unlock it at level eight.

Assault Rifle... M16

The official gun of the army during the Vietnam War, the M16 is lethal because of its high accuracy and range. Thanks to its raw stopping power it can also turn Russian evil-doers into Kremlin kebabs. You get it at level four in multi-player.

Assault Rifle... FAMAS

The deadliest thing to come out of France since Thierry Henry's right foot, the FAMAS was first deployed in the Gulf War in 1991. It often comes in a flashy zebra-striped variety in *Modern Warfare*. Not stealthy, but it's the most accurate rifle around.

Assault Rifle... M14

This is a proper antique. It's not been used by the US Army since the 70s, but clearly no one told Infinity Ward, because this is a lethal man-mangling instrument of death. Packing a handy thermal scope, it's ideal if baddies chuck smoke grenades at you.

Sub Machine Gun... P90

Sex in machine gun form. That's the only way to describe this incredible weapon. Light and mobile, the Project 90 was designed in Belgium in the late 80s. There's simply no better weapon for when you find yourself surrounded by close quarter fools.

Sub Machine Gun... Mini-Uzi

The Uzi was first designed by an Israeli Major in the '40s. Back then he couldn't have imagined his gun would one day be duel-wielded by gamers sat at home in their pants. Accurate, mobile and lethally quick to fire.

Light Machine Gun... Steyr AUG HBAR

The premier weapon of the Austrian Army is as arthritic as your Gran's dodgy hip. Thankfully, its handy scope and deadly accuracy make this a great gun for players who like to fight from range. Get it at level 32.

Light Machine Gun... M240

The M240 is surely set to become one of the most infamous weapons in gaming history, due to it's inclusion in the campaign's No Russian mission. It's pretty stiff, though it packs a decent range and a high rate of fire.

Light Machine Gun... SA80 L86 LSW

It might sound like the world's most convoluted post code, but this hefty weapon is the game's best light machine gun. High damage and impressive range make this brutally effective. Available from level one.

Sniper Rifle... Barrett .50cal

Want to take a Juggernaut down without getting shot up? Use this powerful, quick-firing sniper rifle. Nicknamed the Light Fifty (due to its ammo), this weapon was designed in the 1980s by Ronnie Barrett.

Sniper Rifle... WA2000

Spec Ops' annoyingly accurate Ghillie snipers use this German gun, which was one of the first rifles to use a night vision scope. Faster to fire than the Intervention, it's the stuff of marksmen's wet dreams. Reach level 36 to use it against online opponents.

Machine Pistol... M93 Raffica

The weapon that shames all handguns. It might look like a normal sidearm, but this is the quickest, most powerful pistol in the game. It's the perfect weapon to fall back on when you need to reload your main.

Machine Pistol... TMP

Where most machine guns fire two to three round bursts, the TMP fires 10-15. With numbers to make gun nuts mess their undergarments, this gun is extremely accurate and reliable. Reach level 58 online (good luck with that) and it's yours...

Machine Pistol... PP2000

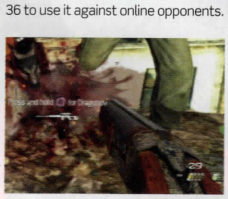
The PP2000 was first publicly displayed in Moscow back in 2004. Primarily used by SWAT members, this pain-packing pistol is only behind the M93 in terms of power and accuracy. A great sidearm to have on your belt.

Shotgun... AA-12

This weapon is a Godsend... well, if God approved of sending men weapons that can shred their fellow humans with a single blast. The only gun in its class that can be equipped with a heartbeat sensor, the AA-12 is invaluable in reduced visibility.

Shotgun... Striker

Not to be confused with a predatory fox in the box in footie, this Striker is more concerned with riddling a man's corpse with bullets than blasting one in the onion bag. Created in South Africa, this shotty is impressively quick for close quarters combat.



Shotgun... Ranger

OK, so its stats are rubbish. It might be stubby and a bit weak, but we don't care. Why? Because it's the only shotgun you can dual-wield. And for pure chicken-massacring fun in the Favela level, it's the ultimate gun for slaughtering poultry with.

Handgun... Desert Eagle

A gas-powered hand cannon that's powerful enough to punch a hole through a mountain. Designed in Israel, this pistol has fantastic range, although it's not that accurate. You'll need to hit level 62 to wield it online.

Handgun... 44 Magnum

Being the official killing device of Dirty Harry automatically assures the Magnum's status as the coolest gun ever made. When it's not making schizophrenic cops' days, its showing its impressive stopping power.

Handgun... M1911

One of the most prolific handguns in modern times, the M1911 was used in every major conflict between World War One and Vietnam. It might feel retro, but this still packs a mean Ruskie-ruining punch. Only available in the campaign though, sadly.

COD FAQ

Q Any advice for completing Spec Ops?
A Team up with a mate and try them on the easier difficulty settings first. Although you can do most of the missions on your own, it's better in co-op. You'll have more fun with a second player and save your sanity when you get to the Echo levels.

Q What perks should I choose online?
A It depends on your style. There's a perk to suit every sort of taste. Like sniping from distance? Choose Steady Aim to improve your accuracy. Stopping power is good for mid-range riflemen. We listed loads of pro perk combinations in our 12-page guide last month.

Launcher... Stinger

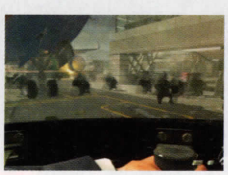
The surface-to-air missile that Solid Snake made famous, this is the best weapon to use when you've got a helicopter on your ass. Aside from the Javelin, this is the only launcher that can home in on targets. You unlock it online when you hit level 30.

Launcher... RPG

The RPG is pretty old fashioned when placed next to the Stinger. But at least it gives you a couple of rockets, meaning you can mess up your first shot and still take out your enemies. It takes an age to reload mind – get in cover before you hit ⓡ.

Launcher... Thumper

It might share the same nickname as Bambi's best mate, but this is still one hell of a weapon. Officially known as the M79 grenade launcher, the ability to ricochet its shells off walls makes it perfect for forcing foes out of cover. Reach level 14 unlock it.



Protection... Riot Shield

Trust us, during heated online matches the riot shield can be invaluable. Brilliant online, it'll protect you from bullet fire, allowing you to advance and providing your team mates with flanking opportunities.

Melee... Knife

It won't damage a tank but there's an argument that the knife is the games best weapon. Useful in compact maps where there's lots of close range combat, there's no better feeling than knifing another man in the throat. In game, of course.

SURVIVE The mightiest multi-player maps

Try... Afghan
A brilliantly balanced map, Afghan caters for stealthy players and those who like to wade in all guns blazing. It's great for team deathmatches as it contains a military bunker and cave that can be used as bases.

Try... Derail
Like epic team battles? Then this sprawling map is for you. It's also covered in potential hiding places for snipers, so be careful to watch your back. Its open areas are also great for ground battles.

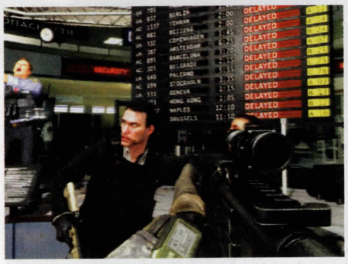
Try... Highrise
A map that's ideal for close quarters combat. Our favourite thing about this level, though, is the ace sniping spots. Grab yourself a rifle and head for the cranes, where you can use the girders as a lethal vantage point.

Try... Scrapyard
Probably the best deathmatch map thanks to its compact nature. With tonnes of buildings to aim out of, it's always sniper central, so try not to expose yourself by running around like a headless conscript.

Try... Skidrow
In terms of layout, this is one of *Modern Warfare 2*'s most interesting offerings. Fast and frantic, the presence of a turret and lots of available cover gives more methodical players a chance, too.

Try... Terminal
A mid-sized map full of beautifully placed choke points. The plane you can enter is definitely our favourite thing about it. And if you lay prone at the back of its aisle, you can pick off unsuspecting foes.

FIND Ace Easter eggs



Museum trip The first game had the tough post-credits Mile High Club mini-game. *MW2* has an awesome interactive museum. Brilliantly, you can shoot all the characters on show so you can finally pop Makarov.

Bowled over In a nod to Robert Bowling, the game's creative strategist and Twitter addict, the rest of his Infinity Ward mates have named one of the Rangers after him. Sadly his character bites it a few missions in.

Dollhouse Makarov might be a vicious mass-murdering sociopath, but at least he's considerate enough to give his followers sex toys. You can find the Only Fools and Horses-style lady in the bathroom of the safehouse level.

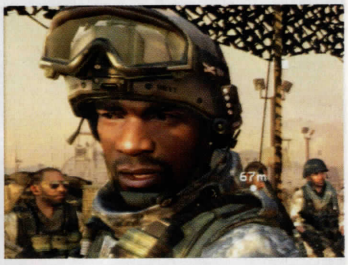
Crippling chickens Take time out from the carnage in the Favela and you can slaughter these innocent egg-layers. Look closely when you shoot them to spot their ridiculous Looney Tunes-style death animation.

MEET COD's coolest characters

Captain Price The proprietor of the finest moustache in the history of facial hair is also the hardest solider ever to slip into a Ghillie sniper suit. His dulcet cockney tones are provided by former Eastenders baddie Billy Murray.

Soap McTavish The most grizzled Scotsman since Rab C. Nesbitt, Soap McTavish is an avid mountain climber, Mohawk groomer and all round badass. He's played by Kevin McKidd who's starred in Trainspotting and Rome.

Ghost Craig Fairbass' *COD* characters have a shorter shelf life than semi-skimmed milk. Both Gaz and Ghost (are they the same character?) have bought the farm in brutal fashion. Still, he does know how to rock a skull balaclava.



Sergeant Foley The only member of the Rangers with any personality, Foley is as tough a as a pair of titanium-coated boots. The grizzled marine is voiced by veteran thespian Keith David, who also voices Halo's Arbiter.

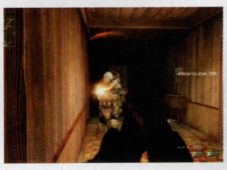
CHALLENGE Solid Spec Ops missions

Beat... O Cristo Redentor
The Favela stage is the hardest Alpha mission in the game. If you're going for three stars, we suggest carrying the AA-12 with heartbeat sensor to read the attackers positions.

Beat... Body Count
This Bravo mission is a massive slog, especially if you're trying to nab a three star rating. We suggest fleeing to the diner and defending your position from there. You'll have to kill about 20 men to gain the stars.

Beat... Hidden
This. Is. Heartbreaking. Seriously, try this on your own instead of co-op and it'll break you into a million pieces. Set in Chernobyl, the level is full of snipers, so stay crouched and proceed with caution.

Beat... Snatch and Grab
One of the hardest Ops, this Charlie mission tasks you with reaching an extraction point. Trouble is, there are tonnes of soldiers and seven near invincible Juggernauts standing in your way. Try to take them all out.



Beat... Estate Takedown
This Delta Op, set around Makarov's safehouse, throws everything *and* the kitchen sink at you. And by kitchen sink we mean sociopathic soldiers, snipers and Juggernauts.

Beat... Armour Piercing
As the game kindly warns you before this Op loads 'this probably isn't even possible'. And trying to take out 15 Juggernauts on an oil rig is only for those who like to suffer.

OMG Cavernous single player plot holes

Stupid... Blame game
Russia blames the US for the airport massacre after finding an American agent's corpse at the scene. But they can't identify international terrorist Markarov's unmasked face from surveillance footage? Absurd.

Stupid... Nuke them
Captain Price may be the hardest pensioner ever, but he's still not hard enough to launch a nuke on his own. From a logistical standpoint, Price firing a nuclear weapon by himself, with no launch codes is just fanciful.

Stupid... What a trench
Not to nitpick... OK, to massively nitpick, but how did the Rangers manage to dig so many huge ditches around the White House in a matter of hours? Especially considering they were under fire from the Russians.

Stupid... Tats your lot
The story threads of the tattooed corpse the Rangers find and the dead high value individual discovered in the panic room are dropped like the baddest habits with nary a hint of explanation. Super confusing.

Stupid... Prison Break
We're glad Price is alive, but we're never given a clue as to how he ends up in the gulag. An injured war hero after the first game, it seems unlikely the government would let him rot after he prevented nuclear war.

Stupid... The betrayal
The bit where Price and Soap become internationally wanted men after Shepherd betrays them is just silly. Years of impeccable service by both, including saving the world five years prior, is simply forgotten.

DEFINING MOMENT

Silencing bards in Assassin's Creed 2

When the music's over...
The worst things on the streets of Venice aren't the foul-smelling canals, pickpockets or corrupt guards – it's these travelling troubadours. They prance in front of you twanging their lutes, singing off-key, blocking your path, begging for Florins. But little do they know that by cornering *you* they've just angered an assassin with knives hidden up his sleeves. How you get rid of these irritants is up to you. You can mercilessly murder them in full view of gasping crowds; silently poison them and watch them die a slow (and hilarious) death; shove them in the canal; tackle them to the ground – and their reactions are hilarious. "Is my art so bad?!" they whimper in a thick Italian accent as they strum their last bum note. Be careful though; kill three in quick succession and it's game over, because, as the game reminds you, 'Ezio did not kill civilians'.

The bard freezes in shock as Ezio raises his dagger

"How you get rid of these irritants is up to you"

1 Bully

Select your target A quick wander around any of *Assassin's Creed*'s cities will quickly reveal a prancing bard. You can't use the 'gentle push' button to nudge him aside as you would normal civilians, so you're going to have to employ more brutal methods.

2 Murder

Maximum publicity If you've no qualms about your notoriety, butcher the tuneless sap in full view of the local guards. Our preferred method is a rapid, pitiless termination by hidden blade, but a quick mauling by hammer or sword combo is just as satisfying.

3 Poison

Easy does it But to keep your cover, give the bard a quick jab with Ezio's poison blade. Onlookers will gather to watch him jerk and spasm as his nervous system shuts down, thinking he's drunk. But our favourite is tossing him into one of Venice's canals. Nobody will ever know...

PlayStation's best kept secrets revealed every month

Bonus area › **CoD: Modern Warfare 2** › Highrise hide site

On Highrise, go to the back left corner. Jump over the scaffolding and climb up.

At the top, follow the ledge to another platform. Climb up to the rooftop.

Use Tactical Insertion to respawn at this great sniper spot. Note the teddy bears...

Easter egg › **Assassin's Creed 2** › Mega Ezio versus Giant Octopus

At the final part of the tomb in Santa Maria della Visitazione use the lever...

Look into the water. Stay motionless and you'll spot a giant squid swimming past.

Activate the lever again and this time a giant tentacle shoots out of the water.

Bonus weapon › **Dragon Age: Origins** › The sword and the throne

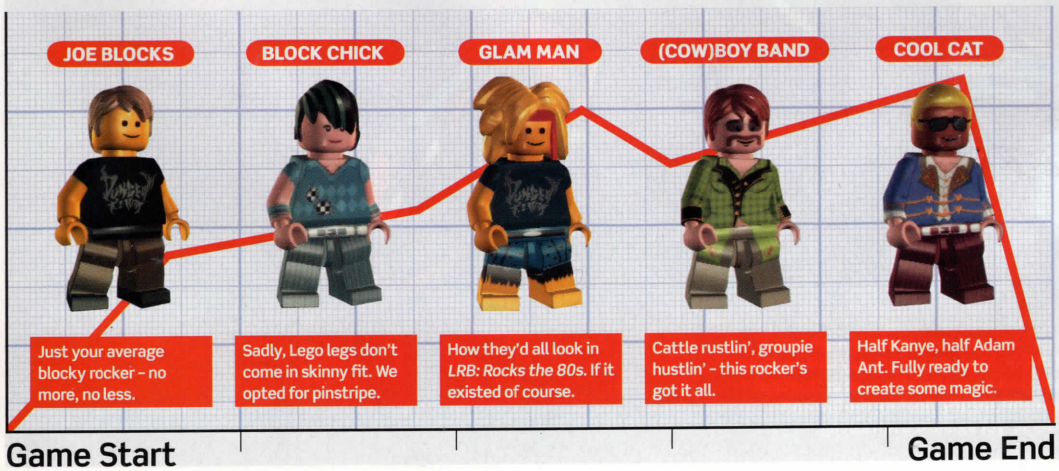
Before picking a new king, head into the Royal Palace in Orzammar with a full party.

Place one party member on each of three switches. Then activate the throne.

Kill the dragon that appears. You'll get the Ageless Legendary Sword for your trouble.

From zero to hero in... Lego Rock Band

From garage band rocker to elitist muso, *Lego Rock Band* gives you options...



Just your average blocky rocker – no more, no less.

Sadly, Lego legs don't come in skinny fit. We opted for pinstripe.

How they'd all look in *LRB: Rocks the 80s*. If it existed of course.

Cattle rustlin', groupie hustlin' – this rocker's got it all.

Half Kanye, half Adam Ant. Fully ready to create some magic.

The Top 5 Cheats you *must* know

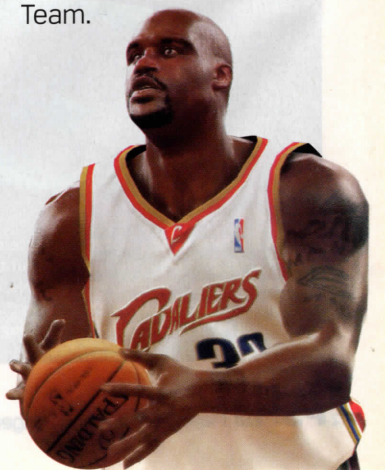
1 Tony Hawk: Ride
Bonus level
Select the cheat screen from the options menu and enter FEELINGEIGHTIES to unlock the Quicksilver '80s level.

2 NBA Live 10
Extra jerseys
Enter 'Ndnbalrooaesdco' as a case-sensitive cheat to unlock the Grizzlies', Hawks', Mavericks' and Rockets', secondary road jerseys.

3 Star Wars TCW
Ultimate lightsaber
Enter Right, Down, ↓, ↑, ←, ↑, ↑, ↓ at the cheats menu in the shop.

4 Lego Indiana Jones 2
Unlock biplane
Enter 7VLKAF into the cheat menu to unlock the biplane.

5 NBA 2K10
Bonus team
Enter 2ksports as a cheat in the codes menu to unlock the 2K Sports Team.



RETRO REVIEW

Why Sly 3 is the smartest platformer on PS2

Tom Sykes

Pub Sony
Dev Sucker Punch
FYI PS2 | 2005 | PSM69 87%
The *Sly Cooper* series emerged in 2002 with elements of platforming, action and stealth. The first game introduced Sly – orphan and descendent of master thieves. *2* let you play as Murray and Bentley, but *3* added even more, including multi-player mini-games.

If only Desmond had cast his genetic memory back a bit further. Altair wasn't the first criminal type to explore the world by rooftop; it was a charming thief by the name of Sly Cooper. Over the course of three games, Sly and his Oceans 11-style gang of shady animal associates perfected the blueprint for their very own genre: the stealth-action-platform-'em-up. We agree that it needs a better name. As with anything new and exciting, the genre was criminally ignored and under-appreciated until a moody git in a white cowl pinched the raccoon's best ideas. We'll have your hand for that, Altair.

Three games in and we catch Sly attempting to break into his family's secret Cooper Vault – to do this he needs to travel the world, recruiting specialists for his select band of thieves. Well before Ezio swaggered into Venice, Sly and Co. had already come and gone on the hunt for their childhood friend, the guilt-ridden hippopotamus Murray.

It's a rare game that can make you care about a massive pink hippo, but melee expert Murray's story is oddly touching. After accidentally putting his friend Bentley – the group's demolitions geek and, incidentally, a turtle – in a wheelchair, Murray put his clobbering days behind him, and left the group in order to attain inner peace. Early scenes are tinged with sadness, which feels entirely unexpected in the context of a cel-shaded platformer. Sly, meanwhile, is pretty much George Clooney in animal form: a suave gentleman thief who has the hots for a fox cop called Carmelita. There's more charm in Sly's bushy tail than there is in *inFamous* man Cole's entire electrically charged body. Many of the game's villains are equally well realised, including Octavius, the bitter singer who became a crime lord after opera went out of fashion.

You Sly devil

Like the previous titles, *Sly 3* offers a mixture of platforming, combat and wonderful cartoon-style stealth. We say 'cartoon' because the game plays a brilliant 'creeping-around' noise worthy of a Hanna Barbara short every time Sly sticks a stealthy paw on the ground. *Metal Gear Solid* would be vastly improved if Snake emitted the same noises while stalking foes. Probably.

While Sly handles stealth and Murray takes care of breaking things, the wheelchair-bound Bentley uses gadgets to scan paintings, plant bombs and so on. And that's just the start – you play as a range of talented animals during the story. It's a game with an absurd amount of variety, encompassing linear platform bits, photography, dogfighting and absolutely everything in-between.

The defining moment...

Among Thieves

Few platform games feature characters in wheelchairs, and even fewer feature heroes who engage in criminal behaviour, but the cast of *Sly 3* feel like remarkably well-realised human beings – despite being animals, obviously. Unlike the straight-laced protagonists of most platform games, the Cooper Clan are loveable rogues, flouting the law and hunting for treasure rather than saving the universe, yet again. It's refreshing.

Flying low Sly enters a dogfighting competition over the skies of Holland.

The *Sly Cooper* thrill-o-graph

Genius!
The norm
Pish poor
START
Breaking into the closely-guarded Cooper Vault.
Leaping across the rooftops of Venice.
Hijacking enemy minds and bodies as The Guru.
Framing the Iceland and Belgium dogfighting teams.
Battling pirates on the high seas.
Breaking into the Cooper Vault, again.

Sink or swim *Sly*'s Venice may be relatively small, but it's heavily stylised, and a joy to explore by boat or on foot.

Sadly, *Sly 3* was commercially doomed from the start: it's a tough game to describe and therefore a tough game to sell, and as an action title it's not as immediately satisfying as something like *Ratchet and Clank*. Surrounded by flashy world-hopping peers like *R&C* or *Jak and Daxter* (which introduced a vast *GTA*-style city hub in its second iteration), *Sly 3*'s comparatively limited real-world environments can seem a little bit quaint and restrictive.

But *Sly* is a game about detail, not landmass; a game about climbing up drainpipes rather than rocketing through space; a game about wheelchair-bound turtles instead of... whatever the hell Jak is. It's a distinctly warm and cosy title – *of course* it would end up being overshadowed by an annoying weasel and a jerk with a little green beard.

Sly has yet to appear on the PS3, but various hints plastered all over Sucker Punch's *inFamous* suggest the Cooper Clan could well return in the future. They'd be mad not to: Cole's story barely made a splash among a sea of open world titles, but there'll always be room for a series as charming and unique as this one.

Some parts, like the boat chase through Venice, can be particularly frustrating, but the benefit of having such a wide canvas of activities is that there's usually something different to get on with around the next corner.

Another dimension

James Cameron can eat his hat too, as the game came bundled with 3D glasses. You can only make use of them during select portions of the game – typically brief underground sections featuring holographic switches or lasers – but it's a neat little gimmick, and so infrequent it won't melt your eyes and liquefy your brain, as we all know prolonged exposure to 3D will end up doing to us. You can't stifle the truth, Cameron.

CLASSIC VERDICT

Why now? The tantalising *Sly* hints in *infamous* have made us all nostalgic for the Cooper Clan.
Final thought A warm and witty platform game that deserves an HD sequel on PS3.

The Top 5

Sly characters

1 Sly Cooper
Well, duh. He may be a thief, but he looks out for his friends, and in truth he only steals from those who deserve it. A perfect gentleman in every way.

2 Bentley
A computer expert with a distinctive lisp, Bentley grew up with Sly and Murray in an orphanage. They've been best friends for life.

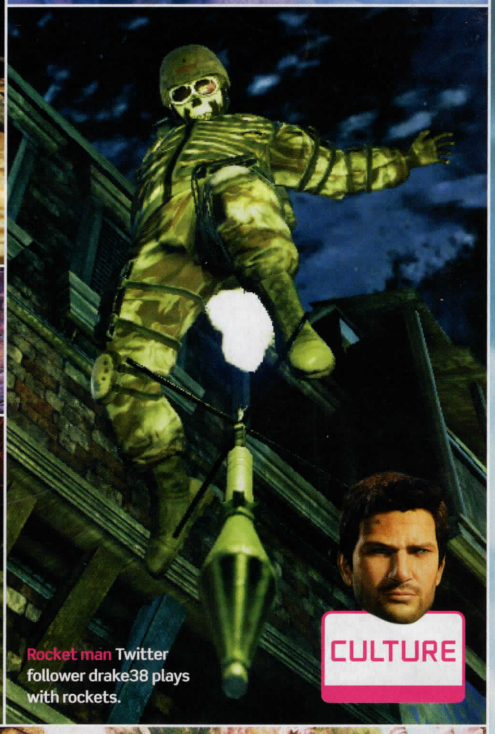
3 Dimitri Lousteau
A villain in *Sly 2*, artist/dancer/diver/iguana Dimitri joined the Cooper Clan in *3*. He's probably the series' funniest character.

4 Carmelita Fox
Sly's love interest may seem attractive, but remember: she's literally a fox. It's her personal mission to track Sly down and put him in jail.

5 Octavio
Every *Sly* villain seems to have a bizarre back-story, and Octavio is no exception: he was set to become an opera sensation until rock music took off instead.

Bend over backwards Alex Tiff shows us just how flexible Elena is.

Zombie nation Nice composition by Ray Ortega.



Rocket man Twitter follower drake38 plays with rockets.

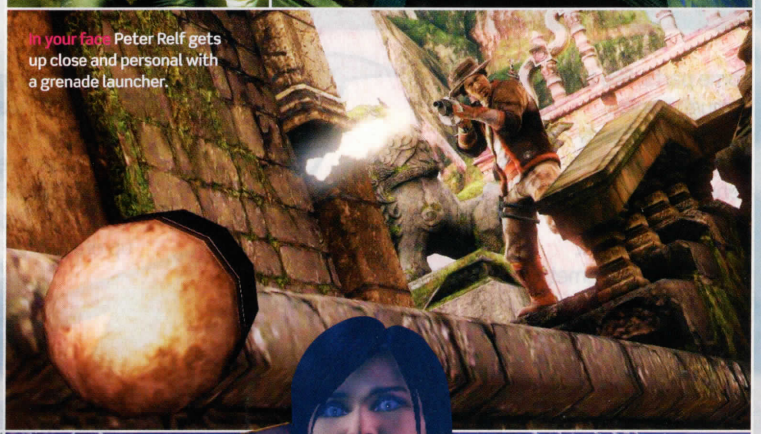
CULTURE

Show us your Uncharted 2 screenshots, and win prizes

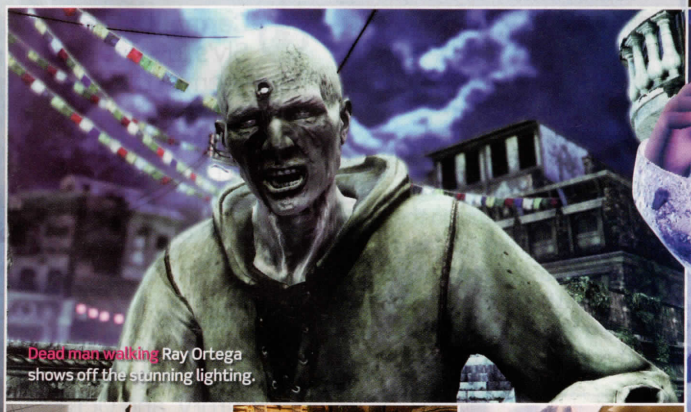
We've been asking readers of PSM3 blog (www.psm3mag.com) to send in their weird, amusing and artistic *Uncharted 2* screenshots – and the response has been brilliant. We're featuring some our favourites on this page, captured by readers Alex Tiff, Ian McDonald, Jonathan Acheson, Peter Relf and Ray Ortega, and Twitter follower drake38.

But we want *more*. So take a look at the examples here, then get busy making your own. To do so, load up a recording of an online match in 'cinema' mode. You can then change the camera angle, add effects and save a capture to your hard drive. Then all you have to do is mail it to us at psm3@futurenet.com, or via the PSN. Our username is PSM3uk.

As well as getting their work of art featured in the magazine, two lucky winners will also receive a special edition of the game that you can't buy in shops. So get busy and show us what you can do with your imagination.

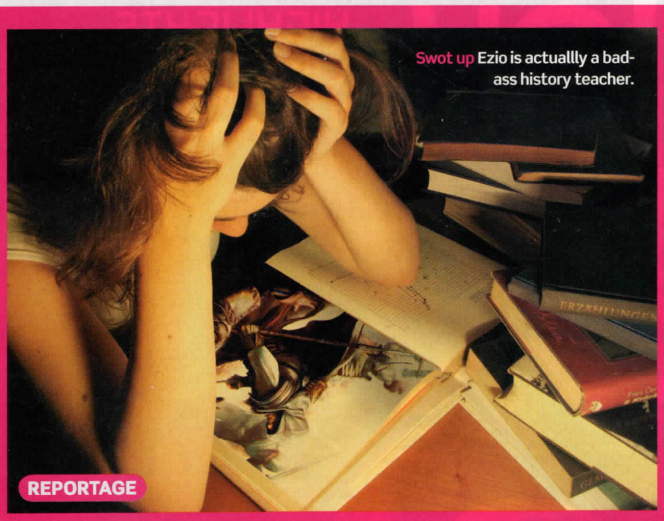


In your face Peter Relf gets up close and personal with a grenade launcher.



Dead man walking Ray Ortega shows off the stunning lighting.

Snow joke Chloe horses around in another quality pic from Twitter's drake38.



REPORTAGE

Killing in the name of... education. Oh.

The other month we told you about Quest To Learn, a US school teaching kids how to play games. And now, demonstrating America's increasing keenness to embrace games, its libraries have come up with 'National Gaming Day'.

"We've found that by adding board and video game formats to library collections", American Library Association President Dr. Camila Alire told Reuters, "we are providing users with tools to build strong literacy practices while sharpening technical and critical thinking skills". *Assassin's II* and *The Saboteur* were two games singled out for making people think about history.

However, where America takes a step forward, Britain takes a step back. Going on holiday in Scotland? At the Crieff Hydro hotel in Perthshire? Well, don't plan on taking your PSP with you, then, because it you won't be allowed to play it. It's banned, or at least it was over Christmas.

The hotel's managing director, Stephen Leckie, said: "With Christmas being the ideal opportunity to spend quality time with our families, we're asking our younger guests to set aside their games consoles for just a few days of the year."

Merry Christmas, folks. Hang on, "younger guests"? Does this mean *we* can play PSP, taunting our kids as they scribble Crayola winkies on crumpled copies of The Scotsman? Er, not that we would. *Of course.*

REPORT

Car games make motor sales stall

Fast cars – we love 'em. Between us, we've probably played almost all of them, from *Burnout Paradise* all the way back to *Chase HQ*, and even earlier. But, according to Masahiro Kawaguchi of Toyota – in what sounds like a peculiar twist on the 'downloading is killing music' debate – car games are bringing the curtain down on the motor industry. No, really. "Playing something that realistic makes the need for cars disappear," he told Japanese newspaper, Mainichi, forgetting the Toyota FT-86 Concept's imminent appearance in *Gran Turismo 5*. D'oh. Anyway, next time you turn on the TV and hear gloomy stories about the automotive industry, it's all because you – yes, you – like a bit of *DiRT* of an evening. Anyway, here are three game-related stories about cars...

1 Space ride

Spotted on the streets of London recently was this – a knackered motor given the sort of paint job you'd never see on Pimp My Ride. Taking inspiration, Dan daubed his Escort with Snake climbing up a ladder. It looks, er, awful. Sorry, *great*.

2 On the run

Yes. It's a driveable *OutRun* arcade cabinet, made by Garnet Hertz at the Pasadena Art Centre College of Design. It uses GPS sensors to display a map of the street but sadly, it's not allowed out on the roads. Because it's a deathtrap.

3 Steering kneel

Sony think this image will make everyone buy *GT* on PSP. Two blokes crouching on cold, hard tiles. Having been relieved of duties when it comes to PS3 TV ads, Sony's 'Ill-Thought Out Marketing' department have been transferred elsewhere.

My first love

Shining Force 3 on the Sega Saturn

By: Adam aka StokedUp
psm3mag.co.uk

When did you first realise you and games were meant for each other?
When I was around 13 or 14 I had a Saturn and an RPG called *Shining Force 3*. I'd never owned an RPG so I didn't know what to expect but I'd read a good feature on the game and I liked the look of it. I waited patiently for the release and shot to my games store on release day.

Was it the gameplay or graphics that seduced you?
Both. At the time those graphics were OK – they were 3D anime and looked alright but the lighting effects and magic attacks were stunning at the time. The gameplay was a mix of exploration/adventure and tactical RPG style battles, something I'd never played before.

Ever tried to relive the moment?
It'd be 50/50 whether i'd want to because of how far games have come. It might ruin the experience for me and stop me feeling the same nostalgia. I have listened to the soundtrack though – it brought back some sweet memories. Maybe I'll check it out on youTube – if it looks awful I'll cross it off.

Online Play

Lag-free insight for sma... er

HIGHLIGHTS

The year's online highlights
Pirates invade *LBP*
Tricky Trophies explained

Best Online games of 2009

It's been a great year for online gaming. Here are the highlights...

Alternative
COD World At War
Forget the campaign – Nazi Zombies offers a hectic substitute for *Uncharted 2*'s survival mode.

BEST FOR ACTION

Pub Sony **Dev** Naughty Dog **Players** 1-10 **Released** October 16

Uncharted 2: Among Thieves

Nathan Drake proves he has real staying power

The challenge here: take a focused, cinematic single-player campaign and translate it into a robust and replayable multi-player mode. Nathan Drake's one-liner-and-a-smirk routine might get you through ten hours of tightly scripted gameplay, but there was no guarantee that his acrobatics and third-person shooting would stand up to proper man-on-man trigger-hammering.

Well, they do. And yes, that was the most homoerotic way to describe multi-player, ever. *Uncharted 2* is change of pace from the twitch-and-spawn of most online shooters. The sneaky verticality takes some serious adjusting to (though if there's a better feeling than hanging off the side of a map and popping up to deliver a surprise bullet to the face it's probably illegal), and *Uncharted*'s almost cartoony guns make for plenty of near-misses and 'How is he not *dead*?' headset exclamations. Plus the hand-to-hand combat produces some of the best fist-punching (or biting) reactions ever. There's simply no way you can dash towards an enemy firing crazily before finishing him off with a flying punch and *not* feel like turbo-charged Indiana Jones.

Team up

For all the quality of the competitive modes, co-op is what'll keep you coming back. The campaign is a highlights reel of the single-player with tougher bad guys, and its survival counterpart is a brilliantly tight test of strategy against increasingly powerful enemies. *Uncharted 2* is a must buy for fans of competitive and co-operative play. Nuff said.

Uncharted 2

"It's change of pace from the usual twitch-and-spawn"

BEST FOR FOOTBALL

Pub EA **Dev** EA Canada **Players** 1-20 **Released** October 2

FIFA 10

It's easy, it's brilliant, and it's football

It works. That's basically all you need to know about *FIFA 10* online. It's functional to the point where playing online is very much like playing offline. And playing offline is brilliant.

Finding friends is just a matter of pressing the big menu button which says 'Invite a friend,' guests can join in on the same machine for friendly matches, and it's also dead easy to set up invitational leagues with automatically generated fixture lists and standings tables. That work/school/club league you always wanted to sort out but never bothered learning Excel for? It can happen.

Still, you've not really played the game until you've lobby-scrambled with nine random teammates to be centre forward during a 10 vs 10 match. And though waiting for 20 players from all over the world to stop shouting at their dog and drinking their tea is just as hard as it sounds, when things *do* click into line the football that emerges is real and exhilarating in a way which no other mode can be.

Alternative
PES 2010
Struggles badly with lag, and unless you're a diehard *FIFA 10* has the sharper gameplay anyway.

BEST FOR RACING

Pub Codemasters **Dev** Codies **Players** 1-8 **Released** Sept 11

Colin McCrae: DiRT 2

Or, more accurately, Colin McRae: Destruction Derby

Aggressive players ruin most online driving games, but not *DiRT*. The constant crashing, ramming and jostling actually adds to the experience, thanks to the game's tough, responsive handling and realistic physics. During one particularly hectic race we nudged a pile of tyres as we turned a corner, sending them spilling across the track. As we sped off, we looked behind us and saw the guys behind get caught in the tangle of rubber and a mighty pile-up ensued.

The game is full of these emergent moments, because almost everything on the track is physics-enbabled, making every race unique. It's fast, too. Really fast. Codemasters' net code is remarkably solid, and there's no lag or frame rate drops to speak of. Which is incredible considering the amount of debris being shed from each car, and the constant bumping and shunting. *DiRT 2* is, at heart, a fast, dynamic, anarchic arcade racer.

Alternative
NFS: Shift
A more subdued, realistic experience, but another fast and fun online racer.

BEST FOR HARDCORE

Pub Codemasters **Dev** Codemasters **Players** 1-8 **Released** October 9

Operation Flashpoint

A welcoming community of team players

There are two breeds of *Flashpoint* player online. The ones who take it seriously, and ones who take it really, really seriously. Jumping into a game on normal difficulty is tough enough but hardcore missions? Get used to it because they're the order of the day on PSN. Maybe it's down to Trophies, or the audience that the more cerebral shooter attracts, but *Operation Flashpoint* is still an FPS experience unlike any other on consoles. It's a game, where you get to say 'cover me' and actually mean it. Simply put, if your mates aren't suppressing when you break for cover, you're dead.

It all leads to a mature and friendly community who aren't afraid to use headsets. *Flashpoint* should always be played in co-op – you just get the most out of it playing with other armchair soldiers.

Alternative
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2
Superb combat and co-op supply a seminal online experience.

BEST FOR PSN

Pub Sony **Dev** SCE Studio Liverpool **Players** 1-8 **Released** October 16

WipEout HD Fury

Fast, uncompromising and gorgeous

Whether hurtling through races or smashing players to pieces in *Fury*'s frenzied eliminator, one thing is for certain: *WipEout HD Fury*'s online play is the centrepiece of a spectacular title.

The best moments come during Eliminator events. Flipping 180 and unleashing a quake onto a cluster of rival ships is one of the most satisfying things in any racing game to date, just rivalled by finishing a race in first place with a slither of shield remaining as rockets fly over your head.

Fury also delivers a superb ranking system and integrated community features, making it effortless to get into a game with friends. One of PSN's best.

Alternative
Fat Princess
Occasionally messy, but get a good team together and *Fat Princess*'s teamplay and humour is superb.

Alternative
Resident Evil 5
Playing through the entire of *Resi 5*'s campaign is a joyous bonding experience for two co-ordinated players.

BEST FOR CO-OP

Pub 2K Games **Dev** Gearbox Software **Players** 1-4 **Released** October 23

Borderlands

Swap guns with chums while reaping XP

Loot didn't used to be a big deal for us console gamers – at least not in a multi-player environment. But oh how quickly we adjust.

We set roles early. Our soldier hangs back and launches healing bullets into the rest of the team. The Siren specialises in elemental gear and softening up the enemy with sparks and flame. The brawler? He pops bodies with his explosive fists. That's right – every time he punches *something*, man or beast, they explode.

The community is great too. Of course, it's fun showing off a corrosive shotgun, but handing down your old weapons to a newbie is just as rewarding. Take your level one character into a veteran's game and you'll be level five within two minutes.

Then, forty hours later, when you've had enough of skags and bandits, there's the superb DLC with extra Trophies and zombie brains to collect. Oh, and we always share the loot.

BEST FOR SHOOTERS

Pub Activision **Dev** Infinity Ward **Players** 1-18 **Released** November 10

COD: Modern Warfare 2

Near-flawless sequel is our dark mistress of death

Playing *Warfare 2* online engenders the kind of love/hate relationship usually reserved for beautiful, emotionally destructive women. We love it. We hate it. We love hating it. It won't let us go.

It's the best online shooter there is. We all know that, right? You can feel it in the bloody squib-splash of every scoped kill, in the huge deadly toy-box of weapons, attachments and perks, in the constant flow of XP and unlocks and back-slaps. "You're winning!" the game grins like an old friend. "Try shooting the next guy with *this*." Hell YEAH I will. It moves and feels like a snake-smooth dream, filled with the kind of details that scream love and attention: the 'this-is-it' gasp of air before a snipe, or the possibly better than sex down-the-sights aiming motion. L1. L1. L1. We've arrived.

This is hardcore

So why the hate? Because it's *hard*. A weird contradiction: *Modern Warfare 2* is at once the biggest game of all time (including Chess, which doesn't even have melee attacks and is therefore for BABIES) and also totally, unrelentingly hardcore. It doesn't pander to the weak and sticks a serrated knife into the chest of the mainstream. Then twists it. Die a bunch of times and you're rewarded with the wet slap of a Death Streak – a few seconds' extra health, or the load-out of the French teenager with mutant reactions who just toasted you for the fourth time in a row. Rack up a row of victims and you're gifted a fleet of Harriers and helicopters to auto-ream the bad guys for you. Same for weapons and perks – the best stuff is reserved for those who play long and hard.

And it remains a problem. Infinity Ward didn't make the best shooter in the world by helping you not to suck. It did it by not compromising. And in this situation, the answer to the problem 'This game is pretty damn tough unless I spend my life playing it' is 'I will spend the entire of my life playing this game.'

The exceptional co-op Spec Ops mode is there for when you're *really* close to tears, but as we all get closer to nailing (or giving up on) those 69 stars, the more competitive multi-player emerges as *Modern Warfare 2*'s brilliant, irresistible mainstay. And, even though it means we get out less these days, that isn't really a problem.

Alternative
Killzone 2
Amazing-looking, with varied modes and great community features. Another standout PS3 exclusive.

Pirates invade LittleBigPlanet

DLC UPDATE

Watch the trailer (bit.ly/6wfuhZ) for these two batches of content and the first thing you notice is how amazing the water looks. It seems photorealistic – a far cry from the previous alternative, placing wavy bits of cardboard on the floor. The second thing you notice is that you can now dress your Sackboy up as Davy Jones, the squid-man from Pirates of the Caribbean 2.

There are two new pieces of DLC: a Level Pack and a Costume Pack. The Costume Pack lets you dress up as Jack Sparrow, Barbarossa and Davy Jones, as well as the less impressive Will Turner, Elizabeth Swann and Tia Dalma (the voodoo lady from the rubbish second and third films).

The Level Pack is more substantial. The addition of water (and swimming) opens up a lot of avenues for creating different types of levels, but there's also five levels based on the films, including Port Royal and the fight against the Kraken. The pack also comes bundled with eleven new Trophies, loads of stickers, objects and decorations, and a costume of its very own – one of the cannibals from Dead Man's Chest. And they're both yours for two pieces of eight.

Well, £4.79 each.

Download queue

Get more from your games with the best new DLC

1 Brutal Legend

Download Tears of the Hextadon and Hammer of Infinite Fate Cost £3.99 & £2.99

If you need more rock-godliness, these packs bring four new weapons, six multi-player maps and new outfits.

2 Borderlands

Download Mad Moxxi's Underdome Riot Cost £6.29

Tough-as-nails 'arena quests' are added to the story with this. Be warned though, you'll need to set aside six hours – saving or switching off isn't allowed mid-mission.

3 The Saboteur

Download The Midnight Show Cost Free

Essentially a game de-censoring coupon, this opens up Paris' seedier sights. Brings a new mini-game and unlocks sultry nightclub-lady nudity. Phew.

My 5 favourite Trophies

Your hardest earned trophies, and how you got them...

Name Jake Mckenzie
Occupation Student
Trophies Collected 345
Rank 7
Details Ever since I heard that first ping of a Trophy unlocking, I've been desperately trying to get as many as I can, regardless of how shoddy the game actually is.

1 Trophy Off The Boat
Rank Bronze
Game *GTA4*
Description You have completed the first mission
Details First Trophy I ever unlocked. Shame it's so pointless and easy.

2 Trophy Platinum Trophy
Rank Platinum
Game *Fallout 3*
Description Collect all other 50 Trophies to earn this Trophy
Details My first, and currently only Platinum.

3 Trophy Pro Runner
Rank Gold
Game *Mirrors Edge*
Description Complete story mode on Hard difficulty.
Details Jesus Christ on a bike! By far the most tedious Trophy I've won.

4 Trophy Welcome Back
Rank Bronze
Game *Flower*
Description Play the game after a week long break
Details I got this after putting *Flower* back on just to show just how sedate it is.

5 Trophy Irony
Rank Bronze
Game *BioShock*
Description The player has taken a picture of Sander Cohen's corpse
Details It was thanks to you guys I got this after posting how in the mag.

Hardest trophies explained

Machine Crusher › **Tekken 6** › Defeat Nancy MI847J

Twinkle toes To achieve this Trophy you need to know how to sidestep effectively, so practise if you can't.

Devil woman Change the difficulty to Easy and set rounds to one. Use Devil Jin as his laser is overpowered.

After the beep Whenever Nancy makes a beeping sound she's about to use her devastating blue laser. Sidestep around it.

Laser show Spam the upwards eye laser attack and keep sidestepping around Nancy and the Trophy's yours.

Steel Fist Expert › **Uncharted 2** › Defeat ten enemies in a row with a punch

Dig deep Chapter Four 'The Dig' has a section with a whole crowd of enemies. Play this on Very Easy.

Shack attack Get to the part where Drake is surrounded in the large shack with Sully providing sniper support.

Punch up Simply run towards an enemy and fire once from the hip. Follow it up with a quick punch.

Dead bodies everywhere Kill ten enemies in a row like this to hear that sweet ping of success/Very Easy shame.

Trophies of the month

The best and worst of PS3's new virtual gongs

Scare-proof Trophy
One Gun

Trophy Gold **Game** *Dead Space* **Description** Nice one – you finished *Dead Space* using only the plasma cutter. You can go and change your soiled garments now.

Admit you're addicted Trophy
Go ULTRA

Trophy Bronze **Game** Peggle **Description** You have to play *Peggle* for a while to master the art of clearing all the pegs from a single stage.

Laughing stock Trophy
The End

Trophy Gold **Game** Leisure Suit Larry Box Office Bust **Description** Yeah, we're laughing at you. You played this awful game through to completion. Why would you do that?

Eh? Trophy
Elephant Dance

Trophy Silver **Game** .detuned **Description** To unlock this silver gong you need to 'dance with four elephants around the chair'. That's not even a metaphor.

Just release *GT5* Trophy
Platinum

Trophy Platinum **Game** Ferrari Challenge **Description** Ok – you've bagged every Trophy in this average-at-best racer. Don't worry, *GT5* is almost here to satisfy your hunger.

For a full list of all PS3 trophies go to www.playstation.joystiq.com/trophies

Browser

Selecting this month's best entertainment

PS3 Top Twenty

The ultimate buyer's guide to PSM3's top-rated PS3, PSN and PSP titles. If it's here, it belongs in your collection

1

LittleBigPlanet

"The game PS3 was waiting for – fun, richly creative and truly fresh. The best toybox you'll ever get to play with."

Pub Sony
Dev Media Molecule
PSM 107

97

2

Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare 2

"Sublime in single, co-op and multi-player. Quite simply an incredible all-round package."

Pub Activision
Dev Infinity Ward
PSM 121

96

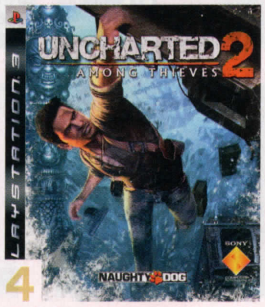
3

GTAIV

"Imperfect, but the most focused, compelling *GTA* outing ever takes 'last-gen' gaming to new next-gen highs."

Pub Rockstar
Dev Rockstar North
PSM 101

96



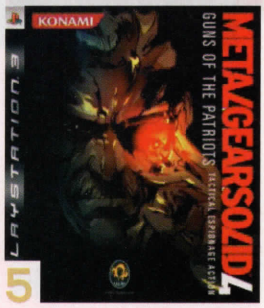
4

Uncharted 2: Among Thieves

"Gorgeous, funny, and epic. A landmark adventure and a great showcase for your PS3."

Pub Sony
Dev Naughty Dog
PSM 120

95



5

Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns Of The Patriots

"A richly-layered masterpiece, but resolving the series' epic history takes its emotional toll."

Pub Konami
Dev Koj Productions
PSM 102

95

6

Street Fighter IV

"Nostalgic yet truly evolutionary, a call to arms for gamers of any age and *Street Fighter* skill. Exceptional stuff."

Pub Capcom
Dev Capcom
PSM 110

95

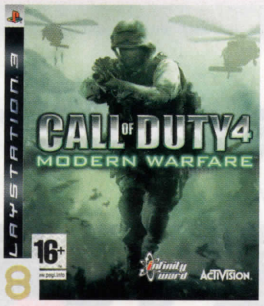
7

Assassin's Creed 2

"Clever, clever stuff. Superb action and a smart, varied and well-rounded story – the perfect sequel."

Pub Ubisoft
Dev Ubisoft
PSM 121

94



8

Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare

"An invigorating FPS, leaving such a dramatic footprint that all others will have to work hard."

Pub Activision
Dev Infinity Ward
PSM 95

94

9

BioShock

"With its involving story and captivating setting, *BioShock*'s as fresh today as it ever was. An essential PS3 play."

Pub 2K Games
Dev 2K Marin
PSM 106

93

10

Ratchet & Clank: Tools Of Destruction

"Intense, beautiful and accessible. A return to the series' roots and a stellar game indeed."

Pub Sony
Dev Insomniac
PSM 93

93

PSP Top 10

LocoRoco

Issue 76 | 93%

"It's simple to pick up and play and equally hard to put down. The best PSP game we've played."

Burnout Legends

Issue 67 | 92%

"Our favourite game on PSP. A fast, fun racer with great online play."

Lumines 2

Issue 82 | 92%

"Games like this are what your PSP was made for. Hypnotic puzzle action that you'll play for ages."

GTA: Vice City Stories

Issue 81 | 91%

"One of the best games on PSP. An example of top-drawer fun."

Virtua Tennis World Tour

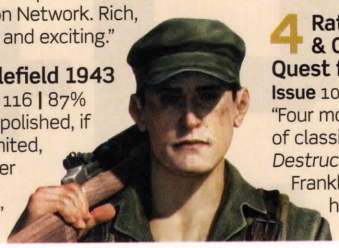
Issue 65 | 91%

"This is a 'must have' title. Easily the Roger Federer of tennis games. Ace."

PlayStation Network Top 10

The ten best games to download today...

1 Warhawk
Issue 92 | 90%
"The perfect opener for the PlayStation Network. Rich, rewarding and exciting."



2 Battlefield 1943
Issue 116 | 87%
"This well polished, if slightly limited, multi-player game is a real steal."

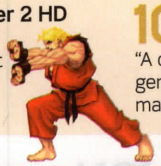
3 Gran Turismo 5 Prologue
Issue 100 | 87%
"The attention to detail is staggering and it handles like a dream. A true technical showcase."

4 Ratchet & Clank: Quest for Booty
Issue 105 | 87%
"Four more hours of classic *Tools of Destruction* action? Frankly, this is pretty hard to fault."

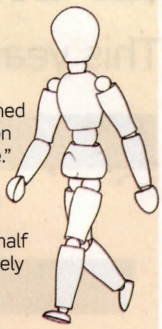
5 Blast Factor
Issue 87 | 85%
"There's very little wrong with this *Geometry Wars* rip-off. It'll provide you with hours of arcade-style fun."

6 Tekken 5: Dark Resurrection
Issue 87 | 84%
"A fighting classic which keeps you coming back. Fits right in on PSP and PS3 and the online mode is great."

7 Super Street Fighter 2 HD
Issue 109 | 84%
"Glory-era *SF* that'll delight nostalgists, but near-vital for every fighting fan."



8 Echochrome
Issue 101 | 83%
"This is the most refined puzzle-action game on PS3. Hugely addictive."



9 Flower
Issue 111 | 83%
"Half art installation, half game, but an exquisitely done PSN game."

10 Comet Crash
Issue 121 | 83%
"A cool twist on the tower defence genre. Great controls and fast action make this another great PSN title."

11

Oblivion

"An RPG offering an experience that no other PS3 title can lay claim to. It's not perfect, but feels close enough."

Pub Ubisoft
Dev Bethesda
PSM 87

93

12

Batman: Arkham Asylum

"An incredible adventure. Only weak detective bits and a handful of lame bosses let it down."

Pub Eidos
Dev Rocksteady
PSM 118

92

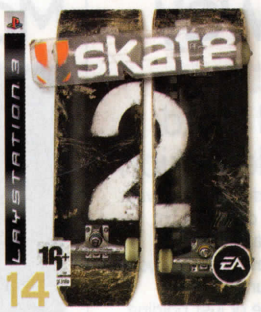
13

Far Cry 2

"Challenging, immersive safari shooter with liberating tactical freedom... *Far Cry 2* is a game you'll live in."

Pub Ubisoft
Dev Ubisoft
PSM 107

91



14

Skate 2

"Instinctive, with near-infinite potential and intuitive controls; only familiarity numbs its raw, playable thrills."

Pub EA
Dev EA Black Box
PSM 110

91

15

Rock Band 2

"This makes you feel more like being in a band than *GH:WT*, meaning this polished sequel edges out its near rivals."

Pub EA
Dev Harmonix
PSM 109

91

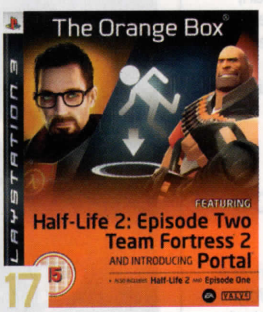
16

Guitar Hero 5

"Not a re-invention but the most thorough and polished GH yet. We finally have a game to rival EA's *Rock Band 2*."

Pub Activision
Dev Neversoft
PSM 119

91



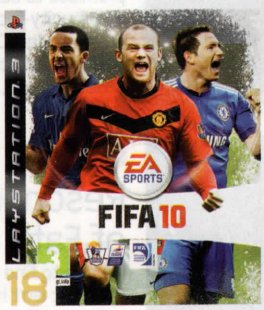
17

The Orange Box

"Five ace games in one awesome package. The slowdown shouldn't stop you having an amazing blast from start to finish."

Pub EA
Dev Valve
PSM 96

90



18

FIFA 10

"The best *FIFA* yet. Will even make huge *PES* fans think twice. Like Mourinho, this year's *FIFA* really is the special one."

Pub EA
Dev EA Canada
PSM 119

90

19

Fallout 3

"Imaginative, epic and brilliant, but not for instant-fix arcade gamers. Continues the tradition of great *Fallout* games."

Pub Bethesda
Dev Bethesda
PSM 107

90

20

Bayonetta

"Sexy, epic and wonderfully ridiculous – a slick action game that embraces and shatters genre cliches."

Pub Sega
Dev Platinum Games
PSM 122

90

Gitaroo Man Lives
Issue 78 | 90%
"Challenging, weird and wonderful, this is unlike anything else on PSP."

GTA: Liberty City Stories
Issue 69 | 90%
"Frustrating at times but this colossal beauty was born to run on PSP."

Crush
Issue 88 | 90%
"Intelligent, inventive... its main drawback is its steep learning curve. But massive fun throughout."

Final Fantasy Tactics
Issue 93 | 89%
"Epic, tactical and polished beyond belief. This will definitely work your brain."

Tekken: Dark Resurrection
Issue 78 | 89%
"Home-console-quality scrapping that doesn't hurt your thumbs."

Early Warning System

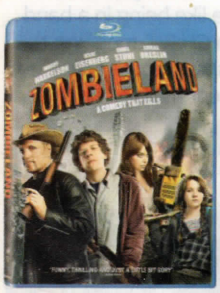
This year's best PS3 releases – and beyond – on one handy page...

3 Months Away

GAME

Red Dead Redemption

Be good or bad in a vast slice of deep-South America, collecting bounties, gambling your gold, hunting down treasure or just holding up stagecoaches. Feels just like a Leone flick.



BLU-RAY

Zombieland

After the zombie apocalypse, four survivors team up to find a safe haven. This wildly successful zombie film isn't a horror at all: it's part road movie and part comedy, finally realising that the undead are fun rather than scary.

GAME

DC Universe Online

All you need to know is this MMO features Batman and Superman, two of the best comic-book heroes ever. You get to fight beside them in Metropolis, Arkham and other familiar cities.

6 Months Away

GAME

Medal of Honor

Taking the fight directly to *Call of Duty*, the new *Medal of Honor* is a complete restart for the series. Its newly improved version of warfare is set in war-torn Afghanistan.

GAME

Blur

If you can get around the divisive premise – it's a racing simulation with power-ups – this promises to be a fun, community-focused driving game. Caters to both the hardcore and casual crowds, which is nice.

GAME

Resonance of Fate

It's rare to find a Tri-Ace RPG that isn't horribly twee or embarrassingly clichéd, but this seems to have managed avoiding both. If *Final Fantasy XIII* doesn't fill you up, this certainly will.

9+ Months Away

GAME

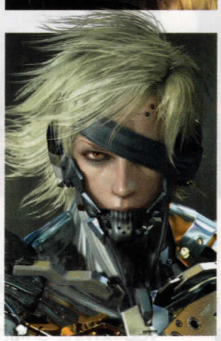
Homefront

Yet another shooter baying for *Modern Warfare*'s blood (or at least a slice of its rather hefty market-share) is this promising near-future FPS by Kaos Studios. Expect massive *Battlefield*-style multi-player to be a highlight.

GAME

Batman: Arkham 2

So much was left unsaid in the original: we never got to fight Killer Croc, and half the iconic Batman villains were absent. Expect to hear more from Joker and his chums in this sequel.



GAME

Metal Gear Rising

Kojima steps aside and lets the other members of his team tackle *MGS*. Expect a radically different, action-focused alternative to Snake's sneaking and stealthing. Big hopes for this one.

Full Release Schedule

The best of the rest

January	
Army of Two: The 40th Day	EA
Bayonetta	Sega
Darksiders: Wrath of War	THQ
Dark Void	Capcom
MAG	Sony
February	
Aliens vs Predator	Sega
BioShock 2	2K Games
Blazblue: Calamity Trigger	PQube
Blur	Activision
Dante's Inferno	EA
Dead 2 Rights: Retribution	Namco Bandai
Heavy Rain	Sony
Lost Planet 2	Capcom
Mafia II	2K Games
ModNation Racers	Sony
RUSE	Ubisoft
March	
Battlefield Bad Company 2	EA
Dead 2 Rights: Retribution	Namco Bandai
Final Fantasy XIII	Square Enix
God of War 3	Sony
Just Cause 2	Square Enix
Singularity	Activision
Yakuza 3	Sega
2010	
Agent	Rockstar
Batman: Arkham Asylum 2	Warner
Brink	Bethesda
Castlevania: LOS	Konami
Dead Rising 2	Capcom
Dead Space 2	EA
Fallout: New Vegas	Bethesda
Final Fantasy XIV	Square Enix
Gran Turismo 5	Sony
Homefront	THQ
I Am Alive	Ubisoft
Max Payne 3	Rockstar
Medal of Honor	EA
Red Dead Redemption	Rockstar
Spec Ops	2K Games
Skate 3	EA
The Last Guardian	Sony
Warhammer 40K Space Marine	THQ

Back Issues
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Why didn't anyone buy...?

They released it... No-one bought it. We explain why

Second Sight

Pub Codies | **Dev** Free Radical **PSM** 53 90%

One reason this third-person shooter from the makers of *TimeSplitters* didn't sell was the cover. Rather than show something exciting like hero John Vattic smashing someone through a window with his psionic mind powers, it showed him sitting in a dark room, crying. Stylish and subtle, sure, but not the kind of thing that makes Average Joe get his wallet out.

It's a real shame, because it was great; a bold, handsome action game that let you use your mind to chuck people about, take over their bodies and heal yourself mid-firefight. Another reason it failed at retail was Midway's *Psi-Ops: The Mindgate Conspiracy*. Although it fared worse critically, its was generally more exciting, letting you pop peoples' heads and set them on fire, rather than just knock them around a bit. And the box art was better, showing an angry, scowling man holding a big gun – a sure-fire recipe for sales success.

So, thanks to a combination of bad marketing and unfortunate release timing, *Second Sight* died on its arse. But it's still one of the best games on PS2 and worth revisiting, as our retro review in issue 105 attested.

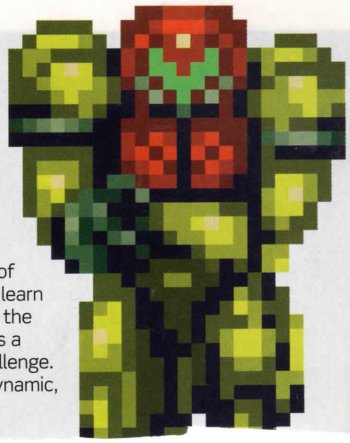
Update a classic

Love a classic game but can't find its modern equivalent? Read on...

Like that?
Super Metroid

What is it? The story of Samus Aran, a bounty hunter battling space pirates to recover the larvae of a Metroid; dangerous creatures who can suck away a person's life force. It's one of the most-loved games of all time, and a highlight of the Super Nintendo's exemplary back catalogue.

Why is it a classic? At the time *Metroid* eschewed the linear structure of its peers, offering a vast, open-ended world – sections of which are steadily unlocked as you learn new abilities. The pacing is perfect, the visuals are dark and stylish, and it is a satisfyingly tough, long-lasting challenge. An impeccable monolith of tight, dynamic, rewarding design.



STRUCTURE

Try this... Batman: A

Format PS3
Release 2009
How is it similar?
Batman's journey through Joker-controlled Arkham mirrors Samus' trek across Zebes. As new abilities are unlocked, new areas becor accessible, opening the isla up piece by piece. Incidenta the game's director, Sefton of Rocksteady, cites *Metroid* his favourite game of all time

PERSPECTIVE

Try this... Bionic Commando Rearmed

Format PS3 **Release** 2008
How is it similar? Last year Capcom proved that the 2D side-scroller isn't dead. This superb and effortlessly stylish-looking PSN game easily overshadowed their so-so 3D remake. It was reminiscent of *Super Metroid* with its multi-tiered level design and satisfyingly slick swinging mechanic to boot.

BOSSES

Try this... Bayonetta

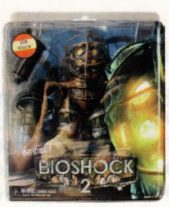
Format PS3 **Release** 2010
How is it similar? At the end of *Metroid*'s sections, a screen-filling boss awaits. From disgusting reptile Kraid to the Mother Brain, they were the perfect way to end the level. On PS3? The biggest bosses belong to the insane *Bayonetta*.

eBay Going, Going, Gone

This month's top lots

BioShock 2 Big Daddy

This is a 'preview' of the *BioShock 2*-flavoured Big Daddies, in plastic form. Features include 'removable tanks' and 'giant drill', and apparently its size has to be 'seen to be believed'. Believe by visiting eBay.



Buy it now £16.99
How Many Left 1
Link bit.ly/6xwwOx

Kingdom Hearts wallet

If you want to add a touch of style to paying for a pint or a six pack of cherry bakewells, nab this wallet. Adorned with the faces of Sora, Roxas and crew, it'll bring a smile to any bored clerk's face. And potential muggers will be too embarrassed to steal it.

Buy it now £6.99
How Many Left 3
Link bit.ly/6pHo7r

Silent Hill film cells

Remember Christophe Gans' actually-pretty-decent Silent Hill film with these framed film cells. It comes with an engraved plaque and that all-important certificate of authenticity. Brilliantly, it's by a company called 'Bad Mother Framer'.

Buy it now £15.99
How Many Left 1
Link bit.ly/9020a3

HDTV of the Month

Toshiba's debut LED-blacklit sets the bar high

sound, and the contrast is spot on, blacks are dark and deep, and whites ping off the screen. It also has Toshiba's own Resolution+ filtering, which really adds to the output quality.

Native Resolution 1920 x 1080 **| 1080p** Yes
Connections HDMI x4, S-Video x1, RGB SCART x1, component x1, USB connectivity.
Web www.toshiba.co.uk

On a Budget

Trump or tramp? Here's the telly for you...

Pioneer Kuro PDP-LX6090

Amazing depth, detail and blacks. One of the best TVs on the market, but the stand, speakers and wallmount are optional extras.
Price £3500 **| Size** 60" **| 1080p** Yes
Connections 3 x Scart, 3 x HDMI, USB, component, composite

Sony KDL-40V5500

A stunning picture, superb sound and internet connectivity all inside this subtly stylish set.
Price £750 **| Size** 40" **| 1080p** Yes
Connections 4x HDMI, 2x Scart, component, composite, Ethernet, Optical Out, USB.

Toshiba 32AV635DB

Packs in plenty of features at a great price – the screen won't match the top-range TVs, but for this price it's a good bet.
Price £350 **| Size** 32" **| 1080p** No
Connections 4x HDMI, 2x Scart, PC input, USB

Gadget Round Up

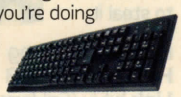
The best unofficial gear available

Headset Jabra BT125

Price £10 **| Web** amazon.co.uk
It's not the flashiest headset, but when it costs just £10, you can't complain. We still prefer the official one if you can afford to spend £30, though.

Datel Wireless Keyboard

Price £18 **| Web** amazon.co.uk
It's wireless, it's a keyboard and it resembles the design aesthetic of the PS3. If you're doing a lot of typing then pick up one of these.



3 in 1 Media Remote

Price £20 **| Web** amazon.co.uk
This is a fully functional remote, but it slides open to reveal two analogue sticks and a qwerty keyboard. An impressive party piece.

Technology questions

The stuff you need to know.

I've run out of space on my hard drive. How much is it going to cost for an upgrade to a bigger unit?
It's probably a lot cheaper and easier than you think. You'll be needing a 2.5" Internal SATA drive. You should be able to find a 320GB one online for about £50. Lots of them are advertised to emphasise compatibility with PS3. Be careful when you unscrew the old fastenings though. We've heard a few horror stories of chewed up screw heads

How do I play movies from a flash drive on my PS3?

Your PS3 won't recognise every single type of video file that you throw at it but it can handle the most common formats. If you are using WMA files then you'll need to go to Settings/System Settings and Enable WMA Playback before your PS3 will play them. You might need to press △ on the drive and select "Show all" for them to be displayed in the first place though.

Can I play PSP game online through the PS3's online connection?
If you can successfully connect your PS3 to a wireless router you shouldn't have much difficulty getting your PSP online. Even better, you can use Ad Hoc Party (currently only available on the Japanese store) to use the local wireless features of your PSP and play against people online. The only problem is that you have to be using a wired connection for your PS3. Check tinyurl.com/lknss9 for a detailed explanation of what you need to do.

I want to change my PS3 username. How can I do this? I don't mind spending money for the privilege if need be.
At present there's no way to change your PSN name. It is possible for you to change the individual name on the user accounts of the PS3, but this won't change the name that appears above your head when in lobbies, or during matches online

Can I use any USB camera for video and voice chat?
Most USB cameras are compatible with the PS3's built in video chat but if you're thinking of *LBP*, sticker creation is only possible if you splash the cash on an official PlayStation Eye camera. It does come with a handy mic too though, so you'll be able to natter away without having to buy a separate headset.

Can I charge my controller when the PS3 is off?
Unfortunately, you'll need to leave the PS3 on if you need to charge your Sixaxis or download some movies or demos. We're hoping for a patch.

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Blu-ray Movies

Legal aliens, cocky bots, the animal kingdom and outer space...

Eviction time Despite the subject matter, District 9's special effects are consistently believable.

God of War 3 demo
District 9 comes with a demo of Kratos' latest adventure on a separate Blu-ray disc. Better still, finish the demo and you'll unlock a 'making of' feature about the game's production.

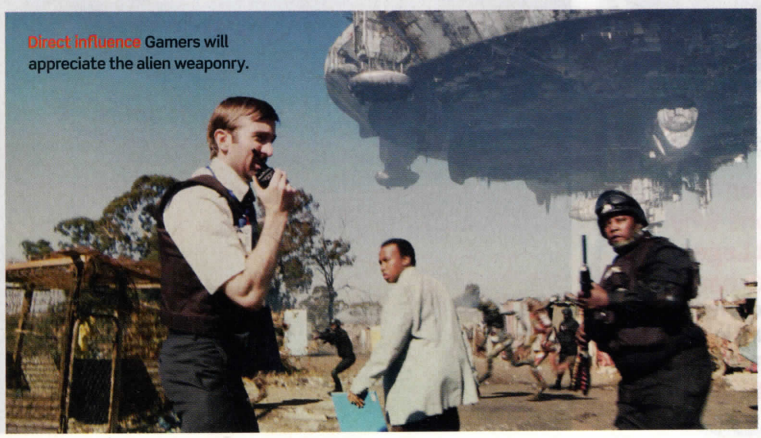
© Columbia Pictures

District 9

Disc Details
Release Out now
RRP £24.99
Discs 1
Aspect Ratio 2.35:1
Audio DTS-HD Master Audio 5.1
Extras Director's commentary, 'Alien Generation – The Visual Effects of District 9', iPhone connectivity

Film Details
Cert 15
Run Time 112 Mins
Year 2009
Director Neill Blomkamp
Stars Sharlto Copley, Jason Cope, Nathalie Boltt

This inventive science fiction movie tells its story of alien refugees in South Africa via a mash-up of traditional narrative, news reports and corporate propaganda. The titular District 9 is a subjugated and demoralised shantytown ruled by anarchy, chaos and gang violence, but the story is never preachy, despite its obvious parallel with South Africa's real racial and political issues. Special features come in the form of a commentary from director Neill Blomkamp (who was originally lined up to direct the now-defunct Halo movie), and a documentary about the production of the film, including director Peter Jackson's involvement with the project. There's also an extensive look at the picture's physical effects, which were created by the Lord of the Rings effects geniuses at WETA Workshop. For details about the world itself, the 'Creating the World of District 9' feature explains the design decisions behind the aliens, their technology and the sinister MNU Corporation that run the troubled alien refugee camp. It's a deservedly rich selection of extras for such a detailed film, and the bundled *God of War 3* demo makes it extra desirable. **Extras** ●●●●●



Direct influence Gamers will appreciate the alien weaponry.

Also available...

Transformers: ROTF

Price £29.99
Stars Shia LaBeouf, Isabel Lucas, Megan Fox

Explosions, robots, Megan Fox. You know the score.
Extras Commentary by Michael Bay, Roberto Orci and Alex Kurtzman, a good selection of alternate scenes and featurettes.

Life

Price £49.99
Stars David Attenborough, animals

Stunning HD follow-up to Attenborough's 'Life on Earth' series. Gawp in awe at the wonder of nature, from plants and insects to primates.
Extras Ten minute 'making of' features for each episode.

Moon

Price £24.99
Stars Sam Rockwell, Kevin Spacey

The best sci-fi film of the year. Isolated on the moon, miner Sam Bell begins to have strange visions of a young girl.
Extras Commentary by Duncan 'Son of Bowie' Jones, 'making of' documentary.

5 things to remember this month

World exclusive BioShock 2 review
"The story is more focused, the combat is tighter. A worthy successor"
page 72

Dead Space 2
"Start getting excited now, because it's going to be amazing... scarier, bigger, and nastier"
page 24

Medal Of Honor
"It's explosive, intense and a far cry from the fusty old WW2 efforts that used to define *Medal Of Honor*"
page 36

Modern Warfare 2 plot blown wide open
"Is Gaz Ghost? What's an ACS Module? *Modern Warfare 2*'s twisting plot explained"
page 94

Ten reasons why Brutal Legend rocks hard
"The biggest names in metal turn in vocal performances"
page 104

Next issue on sale Thursday February 11

1. ***Fallout New Vegas* – Exclusive first look**
2. *Final Fantasy XIII* – our man in Japan is playing it *right now*. Full review of this stunning JRPG next issue.
3. The making of *Assassin's Creed 2* – we chat to the devs about creating one of PS3's biggest, richest games.
4. *Heavy Rain, Dante's Inferno, Aliens vs Predator* – 2010's first wave of incredible games: reviewed.
5. Ten blistering reasons to play *Bayonetta* – plus secret weapons, playable characters and items detailed.

PSM3

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Hotel Review by Davis Burroughs

Olympus Suites, Rapture

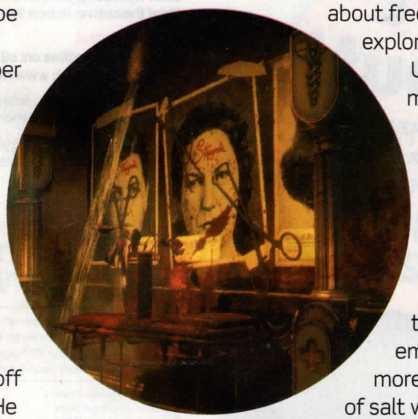
Getting to Rapture can best be described as 'inconvenient'. The city, built six miles beneath the Atlantic Ocean, can only be accessed from a lighthouse, which is a five hour boat trip from the coast of Iceland. Although, if you're willing to spend a little extra, planes can be chartered that routinely crash just near the entrance. Then it's just a short, freezing swim to the city.

Inside, the atmosphere is instantly dreary. It's dark, cold and unwelcoming, and there's no reception desk to speak of – just a bathysphere, which plunges visitors into the depths of the city. When I finally get inside, I find the majority of the staff sleeping on the job; lying face-down in the numerous puddles that dot the peeling linoleum. And they smell, too – when was the last time they bathed? No amount of prodding will wake them up, so I continue to my suite on my own. Abysmal service.

Party time They still haven't cleaned this party up since the late '50s! Shocking lack of general cleanliness.

Restless night

Roaming the corridors looking for the Olympus Suites – the apartment complex where I'll be staying – I catch a glimpse of a member of staff in the distance. They appear to be drunk; making wretched screaming noises and waving a stick around. I shout for him, but he ignores me and scampers off into the distance. He appears to be searching for someone named Adam. Perhaps the hotel manager? How uncouth.



I locate my suite, and the décor leaves a lot to be desired. The carpet is absolutely sodden with water, and speckled with strange stains. The bedding is also soaking wet, and a leak has sprung by the headboard. I telephone room service, but when I ask for a club sandwich and a coke, the operator, Ryan, starts talking about free will. I decide to explore the city.

Unfortunately, most of the bars and entertainment seem to be closed or abandoned. Fighting McDonagh's Tavern, Arcadia, the Fleet Hall – all empty, springing yet more leaks. The smell of salt water is thick in the air. I return to my suite and decide to go to sleep, reminding myself to complain to Adam if I get the chance tomorrow morning.

A truly abysmal night's sleep. The leak, the wet linen, the constant sound of weeping and screeching... not conducive to a deep slumber, all told. This is truly the worst hotel experience of my career. As I leave, I see the staff where they were the day before; fast asleep, face-down in the water. I thank them sarcastically and leave.

Tunnel vision Lovely city views marred by unenthusiastic staff.

Star ratings

Location ★★★★★
Comfort ★★★★★
Cost ★★★★★
Staff ★★★★★
Overall ★★★★★

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